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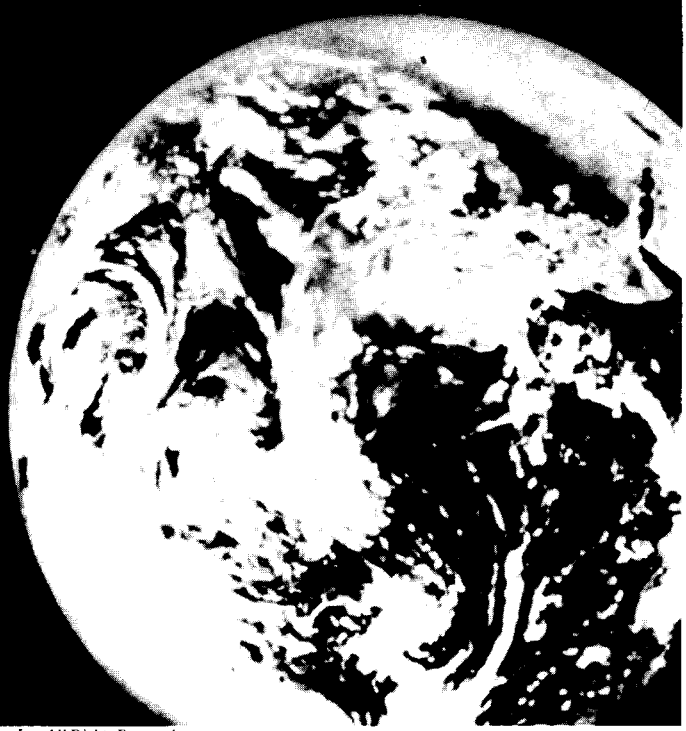

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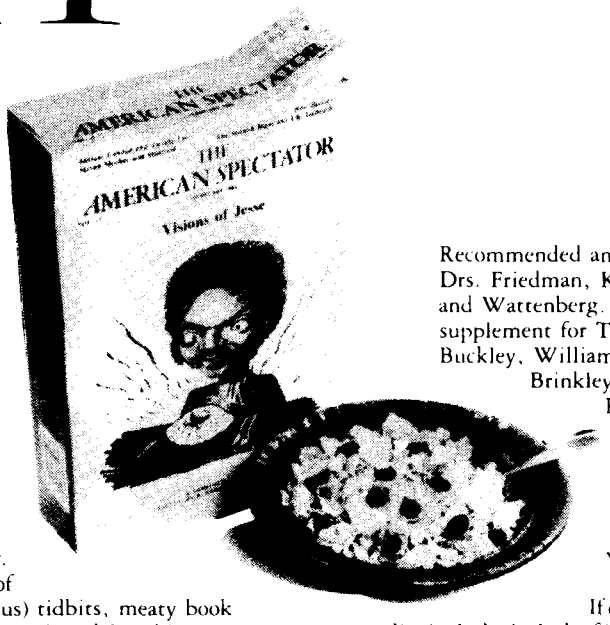

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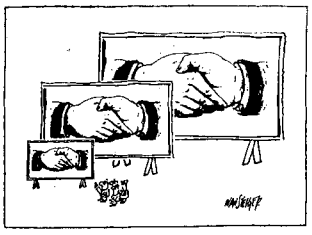
Melvin J. Lasky

The Cycles of Western Fantasy

Our Liberal Ideology & Its Hereditary Disease

"Twentieth-century man is a political neurotic. . . . He carries his private Iron Curtain inside his skull."
Arthur Koestler (1953)



IN CHURCHILL'S famous formulation, to think about the problem of the Soviet Union, its nature and destiny, was to confront equal elements of a puzzle, an enigma, and a mystery. I am not sure whether it was as true then as he thought it was; and it is certainly not true now.

We have to concede that there is much that we do not know about Soviet society, its economy with its shadowy statistics, the Kremlin's conduct of foreign policy based on its autocratic secrets. But we no longer have to rely on the inspired guesswork of the "Kremlinologists"—or as the late, great Franz Borkenau preferred to call his guild, not "Kremlin-astrologers" but "Kremlin-astronomers". True, we do not know the precise nature of Boris Yeltsin's misdemeanours which led to his abrupt dismissal from his Moscow Party post in November. Nor do we know for an absolute fact whether Gorbachov summarily dismissed those Red Army generals for their grotesque irresponsibility in the affair of young Rust's Cessna plane landing in Moscow's Red Square—or whether, in the familiar pattern of bureaucratic infighting and factional quarrels, the new leader had only been looking for a convenient excuse to get them out of power and out of his way.[1]

Such affairs in the West enjoy the notorious clarity of instant history, with the media getting access to almost all of the facts and documents in question—as in the case, in Washington, of the sudden departures of Admiral Poindexter and Colonel North (and even General Bernard Rogers). Still, if we read the standard histories of the USSR from the October Revolution of 1917 through the reign of Stalin, the rise and fall of the adventurous Nikita Khrushchev, to the era of Brezhnev and the emergence of Gorbachov, we can feel with intellectual confidence that—short of having the top-secret archives of the Kremlin open to us—we do know the main currents of Soviet history, the basic elements of its totalitarian one-party structure, its record in the Gulag of violent repression, its hopes and calculations of a new Communist empire, by the zigs-and-zags of its foreign policy towards the hostile and reactionary outside world.

And yet there is a residual problem. When historians get together with knowledgeable observers and expert analysts of Marxism, of Leninism, of Russian traditions of "Slavophilism" and "Westernisation", they cannot avoid cracking their heads over one political puzzle, a special diplomatic enigma and a true world-political mystery. We know so much. The true historical record is rich and detailed. The debates on "the Russian question" over 70 years have been fundamental and fruitful. There are the books on 1917 and after—depicting the Bolshevik *putsch* against a democratically-elected Constituent Assembly; dissecting the ideology of Lenin and Trotsky; studying the importance of the Kronstadt Mutiny, the NEP and forced collectivisation; outlining Stalin's exercise of personal power from his "Show Trials", his pact with Hitler, his victory on the Eastern Front over Nazi Germany, his expansion of an Iron Curtain empire to the Elbe and the Spree—our readers know all the themes and the scholarly authors, and some of them have been published in these pages. Then why, if we know so much, do we understand so little? Why are we floundering around in so much confusion?

NEWSPAPERS and television commentators, newly enchanted by what is presented to them ingeniously as a "Gorbachov Revolution", begin to revise old certainties and propagate new illusions. Foreign Ministers, even Presidents and Chan-

THIS STUDY *of hope and hostility on the Russian Question is based on two papers given recently at a Geneva conference of the International Security Council (in September) and at a Frankfurt meeting of the Kurt Schumacher Stiftung (in October).*

[1] It is important to maintain the distinction here between knowledge and suspicion (or surmise, or "inspired guess-work"). Not the historian but the journalist formulates the meaning of Mathias ("Red Baron") Rust's flight thus:

> ". . . After all [writes Peter Millar, the European correspondent of the *Sunday Telegraph*, 6 September 1987], without the 'Red Baron', Mr Gorbachov might have had more problems persuading a few unwanted generals to take their redundancy."

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cellors, shake hands with Soviet counterparts as if they were sealing alliances with true and tested old allies. Pundits in the press reassure the public of the Soviet leader's overwhelming popularity at home, and indeed even abroad.

Nor is this just a populistic illusion based on some odd and transient mass misperception. The media, in its mindless and unwitting way, sedulously induces it. In September 1987 (when after the Arms Control agreement between President Reagan and Chairman Gorbachov there were further diplomatic exchanges between Moscow and Washington) the correspondent for *The Times* (London) reported that he had an "eerie impression"—as he reported in a news-dispatch which pioneered journalism as a form of psycho-impressionism (*The Times*, 26 September)—of "a sudden switch in traditional roles: the American speech dogmatic and predictable, the Soviet reply honed with finesse to the occasion. . . ." He subsequently explained the US swing to a certain sharpness as an effort to control "wild swings of mood and opinion", after the onset of "fuzzy good feeling"; indeed, "Euphoria would only heighten expectations and lower America's guard. . . ."

Nevertheless, the "eeriness" and the "wildness"—both suspectly masking gullibility—drove one New York observer to despair:

> "Is Mikhail Gorbachov good for America? Practically everyone but me seems to think so [Norman Podhoretz, in the *New York Post*, 20 October 1987].
>
> I exaggerate of course, though not that much. After all, with the highly notable exception of Henry Kissinger, it is hard to think of a single prominent public figure who has unqualifiedly challenged the idea that Gorbachov is a blessing not only to his own people but to us as well . . . [that] the Soviet Union is showing the way to a better society and a more peaceful world."

1. Light from the East

In this fuzzy mood came the recent newspaper reports from Moscow describing a closely-controlled demonstration by Tatars in Red Square and "a joyous rock concert" in the Olympic Stadium. The headline in the *New York Times* (29 July 1987) reads: In Moscow, A New Era?

In the same spirit, which only betrays the journalist's penchant for punch rather than prescience, *The Observer* (London, 20 September, p. 10) put a related rhetorical question:

> "Is the Cold War over at last? It may be. . . . Not since the false hopes of détente were dashed in the 1970s have the superpowers talked so harmoniously. . . . Has [the USSR] yet made the transition from revolutionary to *status quo* power? The evidence begins to suggest that it has."

In this atmosphere it was only characteristic that Anthony Lewis, the *New York Times* columnist, should sharpen the question of a New Era to an apocalyptic point (*International Herald Tribune*, 5 October 1987):

> "Why has Mr Reagan, scourge of the 'evil empire', decided to make a deal with the Soviet Union? . . . to do business with the Russians at an opportune moment in history? . . ."

The answer, of course, was: "The call of history was there." Evidently history is always on the side of doing business, making deals.[2]

In late October 1987, the Western euphoria over the Washington-Moscow arms control deal began to subside; puzzled and angry policy-makers (as an English correspondent reported from Moscow) were "charging Mr Gorbachov with moving the goal-posts and Soviet officials were maintaining that Washington had refused to understand the game. . . ." Peter Millar (in the *Sunday Telegraph*, 25 October 1987) went on to puzzle over times when one system of government appears to be "beyond the instinctive comprehension of the other", and added that "Americans have always failed to understand the capability of the Russian bear to turn its back and sit in a corner ignoring prods and reason alike. . . ."

What this misses is that it is not only an American incapability; it was often the case that the West as a whole failed to understand, even when the Soviet Russian bear emerged from his corner and himself turned to prodding. . . .

At the risk of mixing metaphors, I also cite an analysis, in the leading West German newspaper, of major themes in the new German commentaries on Gorbachov's USSR. The writer had to insist he was serious (*allen Ernstes*) when he came to his rather exasperated conclusion in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (20 October 1987), summing up a puerile neo-romanticism which pictured

> ". . . Gorbachov as Robin Hood, the Soviet Union as Sherwood Forest, and Reagan as the Sheriff of Nottingham."

I have given a few isolated examples, but I am confirmed in my belief that they are not altogether an arbitrary sampling by two pieces of testimony, which are free from "suspect anti-Sovietism" since both come from the Anglo-

---

[2] And the very first deal that was made was a familiar old transaction.

In his column entitled "Mark Up a First Casualty of Détente" (*International Herald Tribune*, 1 October 1987), William Safire reported that President Reagan had now abandoned his "great idea" (about to be approved by Israel) "to build in the Negev desert a powerful radio broadcasting complex that would enable the U.S. government to transmit the truth deep inside Eastern Europe and Central Asia. . . ." It had been a $300 million project for the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe.

Safire noted "how pervasive is the lust for accommodation", and concluded: "Mikhail Gorbachov will surely be pleased at President Reagan's decision to abort the transmitter. . . ."

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American liberal-Left circles whose members tend to lean backward to understand the Soviet point of view. In fact Martin Walker, the Moscow correspondent for *The Guardian* (London), was filled with trepidation before his visit to Washington, since "they [American Sovietologists] were blinkered if not Neanderthal in their approach. . . ." But he was "rather surprised". They showed "readiness to accept what I had to say about the cultural thaw and its implications, and to agree with and even go beyond my guesses about the future course of the Gorbachov reforms." He could only conclude that "a sea-change is taking place"; yet he was not altogether pleased:

> "The capacity of the American media to conjure up an instant myth, to glamorise the mundane and sanctify the profane, should never be underestimated. There is something about the American mood and something in the mechanism of public opinion which is like a pendulum, ready to swing from confidence to despair, from faith to rejection with bewildering speed. . . .
>
> But the American pendulum might swing back too far, and the generosity of the American mood merge dangerously into gullibility."

Candid as this is, it still has a note of ideological petulance, a journalistic irritability with others—Neanderthals forever—who don't ever get things quite right. "In America's new enthusiasm for the changing Soviet Union, there lurks a great danger. . . ."[3]

THE WARNING from Dmitri Simes (a Washington commentator who was once a Russian defector) was even more melodramatic, for after years of propagating hope for an East-West détente he suddenly discovered that public sentiment was reflecting "the congenital American tendency to substitute wishful thinking for realistic analyses of foreign affairs. . . . Here, too, the lurking danger lay in the "historic swings from despair to euphoria".[4]

Still, reasonable and commonsensical warnings have never been effective therapies against recurrence of the fevers of political neurosis. Fantasy compounded by a certain speculative hysteria is on the agenda of the day. This is the hotheaded manner of thought represented by "The W. Averell Harriman Institute for the Advanced Study of the Soviet Union at Columbia University", whose Director writes:

> "New thinking, when real, means one's mind has changed. Has Gorbachov's? . . . Does the change reach beyond tactics and style to affect something truly substantial such as the purposes of policy or the assumptions on which policy is based? Is the Soviet mind changing in ways that are important to the interests of the US and its allies? My answer to all these questions is yes."

Scepticism, which used to be the hallmark of the scholarly spirit, had dissolved into the mist of what Harriman's boss, F.D.R., used to call "iffy questions":

> ". . . if the evolution continues [Dr Legvold adds] and if it comes to affect policy more deeply, the Gorbachov era will turn out to be one of the great turning-points in the history of Soviet foreign policy."[5]

If all around you they are losing their heads, why not go on headlessly in the same spirit? As Neal Ascherson speculated in *The Observer*:

> "One really juicy 'if' question remains. If the Russian Revolution had broken out in 1913, and not in the dreadful emergencies of war, might Russia have become a socialist-led parliamentary democracy instead of a socialist dictatorship run by the Bolshevik minority? And—if so—could that régime have kept up the pace of development, and avoided all the disasters and blunders of the Stalin period? . . ."[6]

AS A CONSEQUENCE of all this, the Western peoples, disoriented by the campaigns of propaganda, disinformation, and wishful thinking, actually "place more trust" (according to the opinion polls) in the autocrat at the head of a *KGB* police-state than in their democratically-elected and democratically-removable leaders responsible for the defence of peace and their own security. The English poet once wrote of:

> *. . . ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,*
> *Confusion worse confounded.*[7]

How, then, did we come to this ruinous situation of "confusion worse confounded"? Why are our current preoccupations darkly troubled by the spectacle of what I have referred to as a familiar old disorientation and a revival of illusions and self-deceptions which we thought we had definitively left behind us generations ago?

Can it be that, just as each child carelessly burns itself and then learns to fear the fire, each generation needs to suffer painfully its own disenchantment? I will return to this question in a moment, for my main theme is an attempt to answer it. But first I will only touch in passing upon Gorbachov's own answer to a related question.

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, in one of his undeniably eloquent and even flamboyant speeches, Gorbachov posed a problem. How, if what he has been telling his audiences (from Moscow to Alma Ata to Vladivostock) is true—namely that the Soviet peoples are in fact ill-housed, ill-fed, ill-clad; that poverty, inefficiency, corruption, alcoholism, and sheer human despair is rife everywhere, and everywhere ripe for exposure in *glasnost*-openness and for restructuring in *perestroika* reforms—then how is it that "our Socialist system

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[3] Martin Walker, "Commentary", *The Guardian*, 30 September 1987, p. 25.

[4] Dmitri Simes and Hugh De Santis, in the *New York Times*, 25 October 1987.

[5] Robert Legvold, in *The Times* (London), 17 November 1987.

[6] Neal Ascherson, "No mistake about the Revolution", in *The Observer* (London, 15 November 1987, p.9).

[7] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book II, l. 995.

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has survived"? Clearly capitalism and the bourgeoisie, in the face of such colossal failures, would have been swept away. But not Socialism, not "our system".[8]

Now I don't find this an adequate or complete answer, although it points to a deep truth. Other social systems would have been, and indeed were, swept away. The nations number many that have in our time undergone fundamental changes of régime, overthrowing miserable old ruling classes—I mention only Spain, Portugal, Argentina, the Philippines. Why, then, has Gorbachov's Soviet system proved itself more safe, stable, and secure? Surely not—as Gorbachov, presumably, would like to believe—because Socialism is so deeply anchored in the hearts of the people that they will freely forgive it anything, any failure and any crime, so long as it still holds out a utopian promise, yet another revolutionary commitment to a better life for the future of "their children and their children's children". No, the system—and Gorbachov, the Bolshevik *apparatchik*, knows its real strengths—maintains itself in power not because of love or loyalty but because of fear, dread, and inertia.

His system remains unrivalled in history because of its well-established network of repressive controls: on the frontiers and in the factories, in the Army and Police and the Party. We call it totalitarian although it is not physically total. (For how then could the Pasternaks and the Solzhenitzyns and the Sakharovs and the Scharanskys still emerge through its net?). . . . Gorbachov knows full well that ultimate safety for his régime lies with its powers to repress, to cut off any movement that endangers the traditional sources of authority: the Communist Party, the Secret Police, and the Red Army. Faces can change; force remains. I seriously doubt whether Mikhail Gorbachov, for all his own affection and devotion to the ideology of October in which he grew up and which gave him an opportunity for greatness, is under any illusion on this score.

It is *we* who tend to run away from reality. The West—and by this I don't mean NATO, I mean Western civilisation, *das Abendland*—can be seriously suspected indeed of illusions on this score. I once wrote a 700-page book on the subject of *Utopia and Revolution*, demonstrating I think (at least to my own satisfaction, if not to my critics') how deeply the hope for Utopia and how theologically the respect for Revolution has sunk itself over the last four centuries into the spirit and psyche of Western culture. Utopias disappoint and Revolutions fail, yet still the pattern prevails. Our Western civilisation (as my thesis runs) has been formed by centuries of utopian hope and revolutionary faith, and the ideals of 1917 in the field of human rights; and, above all, a constitutional stability in the rule of law. "Bourgeois democracy" has not, despite the thousands of predictions in Marxist-Leninist pamphlets, destroyed itself in "social contradictions" and functioning of media policy, for a superficial editorial here progressive and humanist path.[9]

2. *Sclerotic East & Astigmatic West*

I HAVE OFTEN wondered what, in these last four decades of post-War European history, would have been the Cold War balance-of-power if the refugees had run from West to East and *not* East to West; if *we* were unable to plan and produce for our own people who were enduring lives of grey poverty; if *they*, on the other side, were capable of welcoming all who sought refuge and asylum in bright and lively cities where interesting lives could be lived, children

[8] Reported in *Die Welt* (20 February 1987), where a Gorbachov TV broadcast was excerpted: ". . . *Nur der Sozialismus hat dies so lange dulden koennen, der Kapitalismus wäre dann schon pleite gegangen.* (Only Socialism could have withstood this for so long, Capitalism would long since have been declared bankrupt). . . ."

There are also several useful collections of Gorbachov's speeches recently published in English: *Towards a Better World* (Hutchinson, £15.95) and *Socialism, Peace and Democracy: Writings, Speeches, & Reports* (Zwan, £14.95). See also Gorbachov's *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (Collins, £12.95).

Writing about these books, George Walden, MP, remarked pertinently (*Daily Telegraph*, 23 November) that they were being

> "reviewed in too uncritical a spirit. Already, a certain mood of pietistic deference is setting in, typified by the opportunistic unction of Denis Healey's introduction. . . . Among the new believers, any scintilla of doubt is seen as conclusive evidence of a die-hard position."

Among the critical spirits was Professor Richard Pipes, the Harvard historian, who suspected (*Wall Street Journal*, 2 December 1987) that the book attributed to Gorbachov was "probably concocted in Anatoly Dobrynin's international department", and constituted only "a patchwork of clichés, half-truths and non-truths typical of vintage Soviet propaganda. . . ." Pipes concluded:

> "The book aims at a very low level, one that Soviet experts must have decided represents the common Western denominator of ignorance and wishful thinking. Not the least depressing feature of this work, hailed by the *New York Times* as the 'international publishing event of the year', is what it reveals of the Soviet establishment's contempt for the West.
>
> Mr Gorbachev was ill-advised to let party hacks serve up, in his name, such a hash of boring and unbelievable clichés about a genuinely innovative undertaking. . . . *Perestroika* deserves better."

[9] Moscow, as the original centre of contemporary revolutionary euphoria, plays naturally enough the leading role in this recurrence of hope; but Havana, after Castro's (and Ché Guevara's) romantic conquest of power, and now Ortega's Sandinista régime in Managua also come in for their share of periodically reborn confidence.

An American one-hour film, entitled *Vacation Nicaragua* (US TV Channel 13), purported to show the attractions of the new revolutionary society for a group of US tourists. According to the report of one critic (John Corry, in the *New York Times*, 6 October 1987):

> ". . . it does seem that Managua is now a stop on the Road to Damascus . . . we hear a voice, possibly belonging to God. '*History will now change*', the voice says while dark clouds drift across the moon, accompanied by Latin music. '*Perhaps it shall simply be called people*', the voice continues. '*Perhaps it shall simply be called life, perhaps revolution, truth, justice—perhaps simply Nicaragua!*'"

At the end of the tour, one tourist comes to the solemn conclusion—and it adds a rung to the ladder of faith, or yet another spiral in our cycles of Western fantasy—that the Sandinista Revolution may have its faults . . . but "*the concept is so right*". That sense of rectitude will prove, time and again, to be inexpungible.

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liberally educated, men and women free to think and believe as they pleased.

If such were to be the case, I sometimes wonder whether, as in the hypothesis of Gorbachov, our societies would not have fallen apart, our régimes pronounced the miserable failures that they would have been—and swept away, in the name of new forces which would promise to smash "the fetters on production" and hold out the prospect of finally transcending the "*Reich der Notwendigkeit*", the kingdom of necessity, for Marx's "*Reich der Freiheit*", the realm of freedom.

Happily, our democratic societies—unblessed with the terminal sclerotic rigidities of Marxian socialism—have inbuilt, self-corrective mechanisms for change and reform. The Western record can boast of unprecedented achievements in material welfare; proven successes in the puttering pragmatism of financial policies; increasing legality and tolerance in the field of human rights; and, above all, a constitutional stability in the rule of law. "Bourgeois democracy" has not, despite the thousands of predictions in Marxist-Leninist pamphlets, destroyed itself in "social contradictions" and "imperialist wars". It wasn't, as Dr Herbert Marcuse confidently felt, a late form of some doomed social structure. It absorbed millions of refugees and opened its frontiers to all human movement, coming and going. It built no cement walls to divide cities and sent no dissenters (and *refuseniks*) to labour camps. It kept its promises to make a better life for its citizens with whose freely-expressed consent it actually governed. If it had achieved none of these things, it would, as I have ventured to predict, have quickly signed its historic death-warrant. No invocations of the fine idealism of the past, of the Founding Fathers and yesterday's hopes, would have stayed its inevitable doom.

No, Western society in our times has not been on self-destruct.

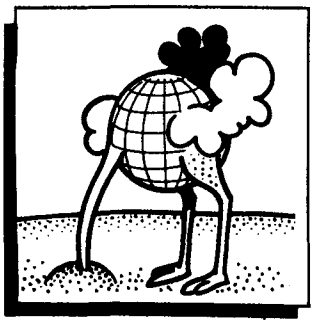
But the embarrassing question I still want to raise is: could it be that its body is stronger than its mind, that *homo faber* is, phylogenetically, better than *homo sapiens*? We have been unswerving in our material success, yet we have been periodically subject to ideological fainting-spells. Our vision in an endangered world becomes cloudy; our eyes become subject to a diplomatic astigmatism. We know from painful historical experience how absolute power can corrupt an illiberal society down to its deepest joints, but we will welcome each new promise of a change which a tyrant may give as a sign of a different era beginning tomorrow.[10]

Is this a psychic disability which can be considered endemic to our societies? Like some gold-medal championship athletes, are we strong in muscle and weak in brain? No, the basic intelligence must be there: for without it how could we have thought precisely and effectively about solving 20th-century economic problems and social crises?

Still, as I have suggested in connection with international affairs, especially in confrontation with the phenomenon which the late (and still lamented) Leonard Schapiro called "Communist Autocracy"—a late-Jacobin form of a utopian-revolutionary society—we have been subject to fits of absent-mindedness, bouts of wilful naivety, strokes of deliberate ignorance, and addictive surges of hallucinatory illusionism. . . . And they have been of such world-political virulence that critics have been tempted to put away our *Lehrtexte* of Clausewitz and Raymond Aron and the like, and turn to Freud and Jung and Lasswell and Koestler,[11] and other such clinical illuminators of political neuroses.

Just in case you may not appreciate the alarming proportion of the pattern of disastrous diplomatic disorientation I have been referring to—and don't mistake it for simple malfunctioning of media policy, for a superficial editorial here and a regrettable press conference there—let me offer a brief outline of the Western ideology's hereditary disease.

3. *The First Cycles*



IN THE VERY beginning, i.e. the years immediately following the Bolshevik October, there was a comprehension in the West about the nature of the new, Soviet, régime. Perhaps it was confined to a sector of the intellectual and political class, but it was incisive and dramatically formulated, ideologically eloquent, and even persuasive. As an example, when Bertrand Russell visited Russia in early 1920, he came back and published this conclusion:

> ". . . Bolshevism may be defended possibly as a dire discipline through which a backward nation is to be rapidly industrialised; but as an experiment in Communism it has failed."
>
> Bertrand Russell, *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism* (London, 1920)

[10] On this point, see the stimulating article by George Urban, "Perestroika versus Oblomov", in *The Times* (London, 23 July 1987). He notes that in post-War Britain a species of socialism (albeit of a distinctly non-Soviet kind) gained a modest foothold in institutions. "It has, nevertheless, taken Mrs Thatcher's government eight years to begin to roll it back and encourage the revival of self-reliance, private initiative and responsibility. . . ."

> "In the Soviet Union, no one, since 1928, has managed a private enterprise, handled convertible currency (except on the black market) or observed a capital market in action.
>
> Three generations have been taught to despise the profit motive. Three generations have seen no management system other than the command economy, and no conception of economic good other than that accruing to the benefit of the state. I would be surprised if Gorbachov succeeded in rekindling the entrepreneurial ethos of capitalism. . . ."

[11] See the discursive essay by Arthur Koestler, first published in *Encounter*, November 1953. Among his telling arguments comes the following:

> ". . . the evidence suggests that 20th-century man is a political neurotic. . . . A neurotic may be described as a person who has faulty contact with reality, and whose judgments are based, ▶

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The possible proviso of "rapid industrialisation" was to prove an absurd and unconvincing defence for later generations; but even in this early period there was an understanding of the systematic incapacity of the Soviet system to succeed in its plans. Russell touched on it, and Rosa Luxemburg deepened the insight. Russell confessed in 1920:

> "I went to Russia as a Communist; but contact with those who have no doubt has intensified a thousandfold my own doubts, not as to Communism itself, but as to the wisdom of holding a creed so firmly that for its sake men are willing to inflict widespread misery."

He saw no reason whatever "to expect equality and freedom to result from such a system except reasons derived from a false psychology and a mistaken analysis of the sources of political power. . . ." Luxemburg went further on just this point (published in both Berlin and London in the year 1922):

> ". . . with repression of political life in the land as a whole, life in the Soviets must also become more and more crippled. Without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of press and assembly, without a free struggle of opinion, life dies out in every public institution, becomes a mere semblance of life, in which only the bureaucracy remains as the active element. Public life gradually falls asleep, a few dozen party leaders of inexhaustible energy and boundless experience direct and rule. Among them in reality only a dozen outstanding heads do the leading and an élite of the working class is invited from time to time to meetings where they are to applaud the speeches of the leaders, and to approve proposed resolutions unanimously: at bottom, then, a clique affair—a dictatorship, to be sure, not the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, but only the dictatorship of a handful of politicians, that is a dictatorship in the bourgeois sense of the rule of the Jacobins. . . . Yes, we can go even further; such conditions must inevitably cause a brutalisation of public life; attempted assassinations, shooting of hostages, etc. . . ."

What happened to this understanding, if not wisdom, as the 1920s progressed? It disappeared, melted down, dropped into the memory hole. Under the impact of the "New Economic Policy" which the Soviet régime launched in the effort to recover from its disastrous old economic policies, Western observers suddenly saw a new and different Russia growing under their eyes. The NEP introduced a limited free market and began to encourage a measure of private trade. Lenin had said one could take a step backward in order, later, to take two steps forward (and even the *Cheka* was given a new and fresh name: the *Gay-Pay-Oo*). Some in the West called it "a Great Retreat", and all thought a new and progressive mixed economy would flower. Especially when new energies and resources were to be released by the abandonment of the ideals of "world revolution", argued for by Trotsky, in favour of the more modest goal of "building socialism in one country" as advocated by the triumphant Stalin.

As the old adage has it, optimistically: one lives and learns. When the 1930s came, it was clear that the pockets of free markets and private trade had been eliminated and a new catastrophe was in the making: mass hunger. None of this could be officially admitted, and some Western correspondents in Moscow obliged the Party's propaganda by collaborating in the mendacity. Walter Duranty, the *New York Times*'s man in Moscow, never mentioned in his dispatches over ten years any food shortages or any casualties of the widespread starvation. Nevertheless, the truth came out. Malcolm Muggeridge, for one, in his dispatches to the *Manchester Guardian* and in his book *Winter in Moscow* (1934), chronicled a shocking era of death and despair.[12]

WERE PEOPLE IN the West persuaded by even the most ingenious pieces of sophistry? I quote from a *New York Times* dispatch from Moscow dated 30 March 1933 (cited in Eugene Lyons, *Assignment in Utopia*, 1937):

> "There is no actual starvation or deaths from starvation but there is widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition."

And, again, in the *New York Times*:

---

not on hard facts, but on his wishes and fears. Facts which are likely to upset the patient's wish-and-fear universe are not admitted to consciousness; they are 'censored' and become repressed complexes. . . . The political clichés which serve as rationalisations of his unconscious fears are as irrelevant as a neurotic's explanations of why he won't eat fish. . . . The political neurotic carries his private Iron Curtain inside his skull."

Further, on the point of the pattern of delusion and self-delusion:

> "One of the outstanding features of neurotic behaviour is the patient's inability to learn from his past experiences. As if acting under a spell, he gets himself over and again into the same type of entanglement and repeats the same errors. . . ."
>
> From "A Guide to Political Neuroses", in Arthur Koestler, *The Trail of the Dinosaur* (1955; Danube ed. 1970), pp. 128-141.

[12] Malcolm Muggeridge's *Winter in Moscow* has recently been reissued (Eerdmans, 1987), with a new introduction by Michael D. Aeschliman—who notes that Muggeridge was later to write that Duranty was "the greatest liar of any journalist I have met in fifty years of journalism". (He was satirised in *Winter in Moscow* as "Jefferson".)

In the British context, Anthony Powell wrote in his memoir *Faces in My Time*, ". . . the force of Muggeridge's virtually one-man onslaught in the 1930s is hard to grasp for those who did not experience those years. The Muggeridge impact, for its cogency to be appreciated, must be understood in relation to the intellectual atmosphere of the period."

In the American context of this "intellectual atmosphere", Robert Conquest has recorded (*Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror Famine*, 1986):

> "At a banquet at the Waldorf Astoria to celebrate the recognition of the USSR by the United States, a list of names was read, each politely applauded by the guests until Walter Duranty's was reached; then, Alexander Woolcott wrote in *The New Yorker*, 'the one really prolonged pandemonium was evoked. . . . Indeed, one got the impression that America, in a spasm of discernment, was recognising both Russia and Walter Duranty'. . . ."

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> "Any report of a famine in Russia is today an exaggeration or malignant propaganda. The food shortage which has affected almost the whole population in the last year and particularly in the grain-producing provinces—the Ukraine, North Caucasus, the lower Volga region—has, however, caused heavy loss of life."

The tenuous distinction between "famine" and "heavy loss of life" could not really hold up. In the West the awareness grew—an understanding sometimes tempered with compassion—that the Soviet régime was indeed pledged to its creed so firmly that it was "willing to inflict widespread misery". It was the recovery of the insight first stated in 1917 to Lenin by his bitter critic at that time, Maxim Gorky, who inveighed against the "Napoleons of Socialism":

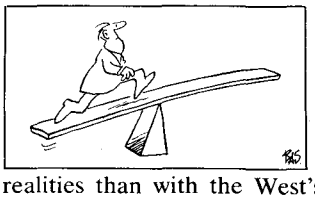
> "The Russian people will pay for this with lakes of blood. . . . And what does Lenin risk if the experiment should fail? For the welfare of the Russian people even a million persons could be killed. Why shouldn't they be killed? There are plenty of murderers. . . ."
>
> Maxim Gorky, *Untimely Thoughts* (1917; ed. 1971)

One further prophetic remark by Gorky, in his paper *New Times* in January 1918:

> "The mass destruction of dissidents and heretics is an old and tried method of Russian policy. Why should Vladimir Lenin deprive himself of this simple solution? . . ."

Thus, once again, our thoughtful man in the West could, and not infrequently did, come to the conclusion—with Gorky, Russell, Luxemburg, Muggeridge, and many others—that here was a revolutionary régime, repressive and ruthless and generally reactionary, locked into poverty and its discontents; and no one should have any illusions about its true basic nature.

4. *The Will to Believe*



But the illusions of the 1920s made a grand recovery in the 1930s, and the comeback had less to do with a new perception (or misperception) of presumed realities than with the West's own neophiliac need to say, proclaim, and believe something new. Roosevelt's "New Deal" gave diplomatic recognition to Stalin's Russia, for the time was deemed to be ready (as Ambassador William Bullitt put it) for "a new and normalized beginning". Soon the Soviets were "abandoning", yet again, an extremist internationalist policy (that of the "Third Period") for a prudent, agreeable, comforting advocacy of a "Popular Front" of all "progressive and bourgeois-democratic forces".

Once again the will-to-believe ran riot. The diplomacy of Maxim Litvinov appeared to give revitalised hope that the Soviet Union was returning to "the family of nations", to the values of conventional European diplomacy. And when Stalin announced his new Soviet Constitution, "the most democratic in the world", there could not have been a better proof that Russian Communism was on its way to the rule of law and an alternative form (possibly even a higher form) of democracy. Sidney and Beatrice Webb claimed confidently that here was a "New Civilization". (The tentative question-mark of the title in the first edition—*A New Civilization?*—was omitted later on.) Distinguished Western writers rushed to call on and chat with Stalin and found him a great statesman, prudent and far-seeing. Bernard Shaw and Emil Ludwig, Lion Feuchtwanger and Romain Rolland were impressed. Shaw even compared him with Einstein and predicted that to the honour of Bolshevism a statue of Lenin would one day be erected in London alongside that of George Washington. Feuchtwanger reported in 1937 about "the happy life" he encountered:[13]

> "The whole big city of Moscow breathed satisfaction and agreement, more than that, happiness."

Nor did the mass arrests and show trials of 1936-38 cast a shadow over the happy rediscovery that Utopia and Revolution were returning home to the fold. When Professor Harold J. Laski, historian and intellectual socialist, visited Andrei Vishinsky in Moscow, he came away with the feeling that here was a distinguished European jurist, incorporating all the best Western traditions. Of the ruthless prosecutor in the great Stalin purges of 1936-38—a far more zealous figure than Robespierre's ferocious Fouquier-Tinville in the French Terror, and in our time comparable only to Freisler in the Nazi *Volksgerichtshof* after the 20th of July—the gentle English scholar who was the friend of US Supreme Court Justices (Oliver Wendell Holmes, Louis Brandeis), and who was to become the Chairman of the triumphant Labour Party in 1945, wrote the following imprudent words:

> ". . . I found him [Vishinsky] a man whose passion was law reform. . . . He was doing what an ideal Minister of Justice would do if we had such a person in Great Britain—forcing his colleagues to consider what is meant by actual experience of the law in action. He brought to the study of the law in operation an energy which we have not seen in this country since the days of Jeremy Bentham."[14]

Thus, in the West of the 1930s another era of fantasy had dawned, quickly expelling the shadows of the earlier perceived realities. The cycle of hope and hostility of the 1930s, recapturing both the fantasising and bitter disenchantment, repeated (*mutatis mutandis*) the cycle of the 1920s. Little, fragile illusions were superficially imposed on disagreeable realities. Constitutionalism had "at long last" come to Russia. A rule of reformed law was coming into being. The Bolsheviks were finally making their peace with bourgeois-democra-

[13] Lion Feuchtwanger, *Moskau* (1937), quoted in Walter Laqueur, *The Fate of the Revolution: Interpretations of Soviet History* (1967), p. 13.

[14] Harold J. Laski, *Law and Justice in the Soviet Union* (London, 1935), p. 21.

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tic values, embracing middle-class progressives in a Popular Front. As for the "purges" and the outlandish confessions at the Show Trials, we were reassured by the ever-apologetic Walter Duranty in the *New York Times* that they had to do "more with Dostoevsky" than with anything else.

IF THE 1930s began with the Soviet image discoloured with the hues of "death and darkness", Kremlin leaders (such as remained alive after Stalin purged the unworthy, guilty ones) were held to be working eagerly for peace and collective security on behalf of a forward-looking society which was busy creating progressive cultural values. When it supported recruitment for an International Brigade to fight against Fascism and for Loyalist (anti-Franco) Spain, young European idealists, among them poets and painters, rallied to the front lines. When it tried to enlist university students for eventual espionage duties in its secret service, a whole host of talented men and women were proud to serve "the homeland of socialism" and to turn their backs on their own countries (where ruling classes were repressing the exploited masses). Such dissenters as emerged on the Left and the liberal centre were quickly labelled "fascists" or "Trotsykite wreckers". I recall men like George Orwell in England (who detected the Stalinist threat in Spain), like Sidney Hook in America (who tried valiantly to call attention to harsh truths about the Moscow Trials), like Boris Souvarine in Paris (whose path-breaking, well-informed biography of Stalin gathered rejection-slips from Left-Bank publishers), and like André Gide (who returned to France from the USSR a chastened and disappointed sympathiser). They were all disappointed men, and isolated spirits in their day.[15]

IN THE 1940s harsh historical events in a real and unmanipulable world again intruded to swing the pendulum of Western opinion. A few short years again sufficed to destroy illusions, to dispel the cultivated naivety and ignorance of those who would be *bien-pensants*, closing their eyes and thinking only the best of what was developing in its way to be a great and evil totalitarian empire.

In 1939 the Soviet Union allied itself to Nazi Germany, and the friendship of the two dictators outraged the world. The three independent Baltic Republics were annexed and incorporated into the USSR. Poland was destroyed, its fate as an independent nation sealed for half-a-century and more.

In the next years, during and after the Hitler-Stalin pact, the Kremlin régime behaved abominably: transferring anti-Nazis (like Marguerite Buber-Neumann) from Stalin's prisons to Hitler's camps; killing the Polish officers at Katyn; shooting leading Jewish Socialists like Ehrlich and Alter. Communists in the West, only yesterday patriots in a Popular Front, had automatically changed their line to denounce "the imperialist war" and give aid-and-comfort to the Hitler-Stalin alliance.

1939-41 returned Bolshevik Russia to the shadows. What, after the embrace of Adolf Hitler, remained of the loyalty to October? Was it still "the greatest single heroic event in the history of the world", as the Western philosopher had proclaimed? What became of the theories of the slow accommodation of Russian attitudes to civilised Western norms, to its growing constitutional respect for law and liberty, to its new-found devotion to peace, to its plans for a liberalised economy?

They disintegrated, and were promptly forgotten. Stalin was ruthless and unforgiving enough to have Trotsky murdered in Mexico. Molotov was seen smiling with Ribbentrop in Berlin. Hitler was even heard expressing admiration for Stalin for his "consistent revolutionary ruthlessness". An important Senator in Washington who was later to become President of the United States—Harry Truman—began to feel that, in the event of a falling-out of the two evil dictatorships, it would be a better part of Western valour to allow Hitler and Stalin to destroy each other. . . .

A FUTURE US Ambassador to Moscow (George Kennan) begged to differ slightly. He was then a young American diplomat who was serving in Berlin on that very day of the falling-out, 22 June 1941; and he penned what he called a "futile little note" voicing the hope that, despite the necessity for Western aid for the Soviet defence on the disintegrating Eastern front:

> ". . . never would we associate ourselves with Russian purposes in the areas of Eastern Europe beyond her own borders. . . ."

But although he was to become in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s (and even beyond) one of the most powerful intellectual influences in US diplomacy and Western public opinion generally, he never quite understood the undulating pattern of early illusions and belated disillusionment I am describing; and, in not mastering it, he became time and again its victim.[16]

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[15] George Orwell, *Homage To Catalonia* (1938); "Looking Back on the Spanish War", in *England Your England* (1953); see also ch. 10, "Spain and 'necessary murder'", in Bernard Crick's biography, *George Orwell: A Life* (1980).

Sidney Hook's memoirs of the "John Dewey Commission", in *Out of Step* (1987), ch. 17, "The Moscow Trials", pp. 218-237.

André Gide, *Retour de l'USSR* (1937); and see Herbert Lottman's "Gide's Return", ch. 13 in his history of *The Left Bank* (1986) which complements Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims* (1981).

[16] George F. Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin* (1961), pp. 352-53. In this book Kennan also detected in the 1950s "a rudimentary parliamentarianism" and "a basic change in the nature and spirit of Soviet society"—one would think a little prematurely, for 30 years later Gorbachov was proclaiming nothing less than "a new revolution" to effect just such a basic change. . . .

On the shifts, changes and reversals in Kennan's attitude to the Soviet Union and the foreign-policy challenges it presents (and does not present), see *Encounters with Kennan: The Great Debate* (1979), especially the critique by Leopold Labedz, "The Two Minds of George Kennan" (ch. 5, pp. 131-149); it is to be reprinted in the forthcoming anthology of Labedz's essays, *The Use and Abuse of Sovietology* (1988).

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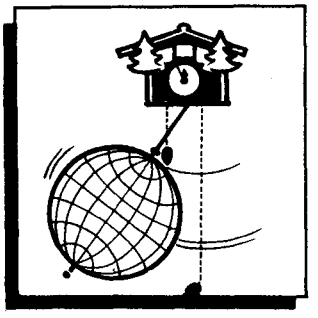
5. *Existentialist Sources*



If I go on, wearyingly, possibly boringly, to chronicle yet another swing of the pendulum, it is not I who am over-simplifying and colouring the picture in primary, garish colours.

Hitler attacked, and the Red Army resisted. From 1941 the USSR became what was called in the West "our gallant ally". Russian nationalism and patriotism heralded a new, more traditional Russia out of the fires of war. Political commissars were removed, and the Comintern dissolved, thus marking the so-called "final end" of world revolution and militant ideology. The *Internationale*, abandoned almost in mid-melody before the end of "the final conflict", was no longer to be sung as the proletarian anthem; and orthodox Church patriarchs suddenly appeared to bless the great Patriotic War.

Western figures, paying deference to "the Heroic Victor of Stalingrad" reconsidered, yet again, the *Vozhd* in the Kremlin, and now found him "kind" (Averell Harriman), "brilliant" (Churchill), "a man you could rely on" (Ambassador Joseph Davies), "a man with whom to build a better new post-War world" (Roosevelt). Pathetic little Cordell Hull, the US Secretary of State, found Stalin so impressively endowed as a politician that he felt that Stalin could also have risen to the very top even in the hurly-burly of American politics. The world's so-called "great democracies" (led by Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin) would preside in concert over the free and united nations; and even old Maxim Litvinov[17] was trotted out and restored to office to encourage another Western myth that was not to be: namely, that the East-West wartime alliance—contrary to almost all the recorded history of wartime alliances—would continue sturdily after military victory over a common foe.

Let me sum up this point, and indicate the two existentialist sources of the ailment passed on from generation to generation.

1. In the integrated Establishment world, occupationally concerned with the dream of a stable Metternichean order of old-fashioned diplomatic balance, there was the constant temptation to believe that the revolution would evolve towards a certain agreeable "normalcy", that revolutionaries would become conservative, and armed bohemians would become conventional. Establishment would speak to Establishment; dialogue and mutual understanding would, in the end, flourish.

2. In the alienated Western progressive world, ideologically predisposed to the ideals of 1789 and 1848 (and even to their extension as prophesied by Marx), there was the recurrent delusion that one needed only *one step*, one historic step forward towards a reformed social structure, one innovation to introduce law or justice or equality or even freedom, in order to revitalise their old ideal of a good society and a liberated humanity. "*The concept was so right.*" For a régime already beyond capitalism and thus agreeably "post-bourgeois", it would be only one small step: but a giant step for all suffering mankind.

Meanwhile, back to our fantasisers of the 1940s. In New York, publishers showed themselves very responsive to the *Zeitgeist* and decided in a shameful act of self-censorship not to publish (at this "sensitive hopeful time") the manuscript of Leon Trotsky's biography of Joseph Stalin. The rationalisation of the day was that there was no point in raking up obsolete ideological issues when it was the spirit of old and "eternal" Russia that was seen a-coming.

George Orwell's satirical masterpiece, *Animal Farm,* suffered the same fate when English publishers similarly succumbed to the almost compulsory drive to "associate themselves with Russian purposes", in these cases acting for a season as the extended arm of Stalin's thought-control. For it was the officially accepted Anglo-American axiom that Russian purposes were similar to, if not identical with, the West's own purposes: a new league of nations guaranteeing international peace and stability in a world without German and Japanese militarism, amicably organised by "the great democracies".

Such was the official message of the Hollywood film which President Roosevelt encouraged to be made: *Mission to Moscow* (1943), based on the best-selling memoir by Ambassador Joseph E. Davies, who thought that Stalin was "kind and gentle", that the Purges were a necessary elimination of Russia's Fifth Column, that Finland was never really invaded or Poland carved up, and that the future was shaping up to be a glorious era of good-neighbourliness, underwritten by USA-USSR friendship and post-War cooperation. A dissenting American film critic (James Agee) termed this Warner Brothers contribution to the war effort "the first Soviet production to come from a major American studio". Stalin evidently liked it well enough, after a private showing in the Kremlin (a copy was sent personally via Davies by President Roosevelt). He approved its importation for showing in all

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[17] Litvinov, privately, was candid enough not to go in for the charade. One American journalist, who visited him (in April 1945) when he was a Vice-Commissar of Foreign Affairs in Moscow, recorded his pessimism:

> "Nobody listens to my advice or pays any attention to what I say. But things look gloomy for future world security. . . ."
>
> Quoted by C. L. Sulzberger in *The Big Thaw* (1956), pp. 80-1.

> "[Litvinov] was a regular Jeremiah, full of gloom . . . he seemed to think worse trouble was coming. A bitter, cynical revolutionary, isolated and alone; he knows he's had it."
>
> C.L. Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles: Memories and Diaries 1934-1954* (1969), pp. 247-8.

Another American journalist has recorded another off-the-record wartime interview with Litvinov; and if either of them is to be believed (neither was exactly famous for truthfulness), we are richer by a remarkable and still-reverberating remark on the whole history of the Cold War:

> "Why did you Americans wait until now [1945] to begin opposing us in the Balkans and Eastern Europe. . . . You should have done this three years ago. Now it's too late. . . ."
>
> Quoted by Edgar Snow, *Journey to the Beginning* (London, 1959), p. 357.

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Soviet movie-houses (as was *North Star*, Lillian Hellman's pro-Soviet film made by MGM). Such protests against Davies's political mendacity and Hollywood's historical falsification as there were—and I organised a lively campaign at the time under the slogan "Submission to Moscow"—were put down to "red-baiters and fascist elements".[18]

At the end of the War I was a young officer in General Eisenhower's I.G. Farben headquarters building (in Frankfurt-am-Main); and as an academically-trained historian I was asked to lecture to the troops along these official guidelines. I objected, and demurred especially at the thesis of Stalin's Russia as a "great democracy". I narrowly escaped being court-martialled for my dissent.

6. *Reluctant Cold Warriors*

THIS TOO WOULD pass away. The mental states of the Western powers, highly strung in a *weltfremde Ideologie*, would break down bit by bit, unable to bear too much reality. The Cold War—a phrase which, by the way, was already used a long time ago, by Eduard Bernstein, the old Social Democrat, in writing about German and European rearmament in the 1890s[19]—broke out in stages, scene by scene, act by act.

First in Moscow, when General John Deane became aware on the very spot, as the wartime US liaison officer, of Stalin's post-War ambitions. Then, in an extraordinary series of humiliating rebuffs, each one taken with wide-eyed childish surprise and pique, the Western influence and even presence was driven out of Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland. Has a little country about which we knew nothing been omitted? We must have overlooked it in the eagerness to capitulate; we always showed patience and goodwill, all the while appeasing. I remember the autumn day in 1947 when the Soviet Army announced that they had done away with Petkov, the courageous leader of Bulgaria's Agrarian Party—and it was literally one week later that the USA formally recognised (as promised to Stalin in Yalta) the post-War Communist-dominated administration of the Bulgarian "Fatherland Front".[20]

The disappointed, rejected West became alarmed. Perhaps the Western Allies had misjudged the Kremlin's motives and its need to turn inward and "devote itself to building Russia up out of the ruins". Perhaps, after all, the Bolsheviks wanted —even without Trotsky, even without the Comintern—to "build socialism" in *more* than one country. Would they keep their word in civil-war-torn Greece and endangered Turkey? Another shock came in Prague, with the Communist seizure of total power in Czechoslovakia. And "the most unkindest cut of all" came in Berlin. Here the strategy was not by the usual means of pressure-politics, police intimidation, defenestration, that had characterised the *Gleichschaltung* of competition and opposition in Prague and Warsaw and Budapest and Sofia and all the rest. In Berlin there would be a blockade: an outrageous overt effort to drive a population and an administration into submission by the single means of hunger and starvation. . . .

I think it was in Berlin that it finally dawned, in all its comprehensiveness, that a Cold War had been raging. The little isolated Baltic scenes, the troublesome Balkan acts here and there, were now seen to be power-plays on one great stage of world politics. Would there be resistance ("containment" Kennan had called it) or more of the same: appeasement, retreat, capitulation?

History records that moment when enough-was-enough, and the Berlin Airlift succeeded in frustrating the Soviet Blockade by feeding (if only barely) the population and maintaining the Western presence. Berlin was not Bucharest, nor Budapest, nor Prague.

But I would like to record a personal moment in that hot summer of the Berlin Blockade 1948. On the day that an American plane went down in the air-corridor I happened to be together in Dahlem with General Lucius Clay in his Im Dol villa. He was being constantly called to the telephone. He was tense and pale-faced, but still with a sturdy firmness that inspired (or at least so I felt with my dry Martini nervously shaking in my hand) a goodly measure of confidence and friendship, and solidarity. I did not see the irony then—I only register it now, flashing back to that moment two years before when I caused something of a scandal by suggesting (in a speech in the Max Reinhardt Theatre in East Berlin to the members of the *Erster Deutsche Schriftsteller Kongress*) that one totalitarian power had succeeded another, that its methods were sometimes the same, and sometimes different —but that the dangers to liberty and free culture were similarly grave. The Soviet Colonel Tulpanov considered my

[18] There is an excellent critical monograph on the history of *Mission to Moscow* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1980) by David Culbert. He refers to dissenting voices (among them: Dwight Macdonald, Edmund Wilson, Lionel Trilling, Sidney Hook, Mary McCarthy), and quotes a document from the social-democratic New York weekly *The New Leader*, by "Matthew Low". Daniel Bell, the editor (as he then was) of the paper, encourages me to disclose, for whatever it is worth, that this was a pen-name of mine, and that I had organised the dissenting critics.

Curiously enough, when 40 years afterward the film was revived on British television (Channel 4, February 1983), it was also attacked by a number of outraged critics (including Leonard Schapiro, Alun Chalfont, Leopold Labedz, and Arthur Koestler). But *The Times* never published their letter, which I had drafted, in an eerie replay of an earlier ideological farce.

[19] See Hugh Thomas, *The Cold War* (Centre for Policy Studies pamphlet, 1987), p. 5. Lord Thomas credits Professor James Joll for the discovery of this "first use" of the phrase "Cold War".

[20] Nikola Petkov was executed on 23 September 1947 after a trial organised by the Communist-dominated "Fatherland Front" government. On 1 October the USA granted Bulgaria formal recognition, following the ratification of the Peace Treaty by the US Senate (although on the very next day Petkov had been arrested).

The US head-of-mission and Minister, Maynard Barnes, was refused permission in Washington by Secretary of State George Marshall to return to Sofia to work for the release of Petkov; he thereupon resigned from the US Foreign Service.

See Cyril E. Black, "The View from Bulgaria", in *Witnesses to the Origins of the Cold War* (ed. Hammond, 1982), p. 89; also John R. Deane, *The Strange Alliance* (1947); and Vojtech Mastny's excellent study of *Russia's Road to the Cold War: Diplomacy, Warfare, and the Politics of Communism, 1941-1945* (1979).

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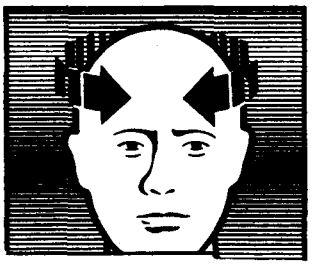
speech a "provocation", and so did the East's most prominent literati: Anna Seghers, Ludwig Renn, Hans Mayer, Valentin Katayev, Boris Gorbatov.[21]

And, it will not surprise you to learn, so did General Clay. Many years later, with a shamefaced touch of embarrassment, he admitted to me that he had wanted on the very next day to have me summarily expelled from West Berlin and from Germany.

7. *The Un-Learning Process*



I AM TEMPTED, but will resist the temptation, to record while I am at it the zigzag patterns of illusion and disillusionment—*can there be more? there can!*—of the 1950s and 1960s and 1970s. Eisenhower learned, and John F. Kennedy had to learn, and even Jimmy Carter was to learn—for he confessed (to Zbigniew Brzezinski) that *if only* he had understood Moscow's foreign policy *before* the lesson of the Afghanistan invasion in 1980. . . .

No sooner was the first phase of post-War resistance to Soviet expansionism over, than the Cold War itself was pronounced over and finished with. Walter Lippmann saw a "new age in the relations of co-existence" between the superpowers. Western sociologists—and they constituted in the 1950s a mighty new school of expertise which rivalled the old guild of Kremlinologists—predicted a "convergence" of the two types of Industrial Society. It was in fact a specious and self-serving theory, which extrapolated from surface similarities in a frenetic eagerness to have the real differences go away. . . .

Optimistic cultural observers rallied to the sociological theoreticians. They accepted "the Thaw", propagated by that dubious (and justly forgotten) prophet Ilya Ehrenburg, as a true "springtime of Russian culture", with a new artistic élite supplying the demand for new aesthetic goods (presumably from Neizvestny's sculptures to Yevtushenko's lyrics) to please the putative new middle class. I remember a visit to Washington to interview leaders in the Kennedy Administration when a high Cabinet official had nothing else on his mind but for me to try to explain what "bourgeoisification" in the Soviet Union really meant.

"Peace Research" institutes sprang up in the West, and gave a new dimension to the Stockholm peace-loving slogans. Harvard scholars detected the development (yet again) of a "new constitutionalism" and another set of "rudiments of parliamentarianism", but also of a powerful, hitherto unknown "public opinion" which was pressuring the Politburo. Fur-hatted Prime Ministers (Macmillan, Wilson) came to Moscow and reported yet another "wind of change".

True, the various revolts and uprisings and short-lived changes of régime—I am referring to the 17th of June in East Berlin, the Hungarian insurrection of October 1956, and the Prague Spring of 1968—taught some unforgettable lessons that were indeed irreversible. Jean-Paul Sartre cried over the Russian tanks in Budapest, and wept again when they reappeared in Prague. But neither he nor any other Western intellectual could quite recover, when the memories faded a little, the sense that something good, even some "terrible beauty", would emerge from a revolution so degenerated. A desperate fall-back position was swiftly devised. Might not Gomulka improve things? And a Kadar was surely a reformer responding to the people's wishes? Shouldn't a Gierek be given Western millions to help introduce something new, a Polish version of a hot Hungarian dish, "goulash communism"? Within a decade the Poles had a debt burden amounting to billions and another depression with long queues for rationed goods; and Budapest was announcing yet another low-point in a ruinous economy which not even a vigorous and ingenious Black Market could save.

THE SHAMEFUL BOTTOM-LINE in one column of the balance-sheet of Western ideology amounted, in any reckoning, to intellectual bankruptcy. Changes in the Soviet world, variously estimated to be "basic", or "significant", or "fundamental", were registered every other year for three decades; and at the end of all this meretricious self-indulgence along came a new Bolshevik leader, Mikhail Gorbachov, pronouncing his country to be in the grip of a mortal stagnation—for almost nothing had changed, except (as he admitted, in a candid moment) for the worse—and promising some few, basic, significant, and fundamental steps for the immediate future!

On occasion, in an astonishing mix of rhetoric and hysteria, things have gone beyond the modest promise of reforms or ameliorations in the social structure. An editor of *Novy Mir*, in a polemical Moscow exchange with enthused *Konsomol* reformers, called their attention to the fact that it was "a revolution from above" which was taking place, and that "gradualism ruins the revolution"! More than that:

> ". . . history will not forgive us if we do not overcome our current condition in a single leap. You can't cross an abyss in two hops. We are standing before an abyss. . . . A revolutionary coup has to be made without looking around, it has to be done the way the Bolsheviks did it then. Gradualism is the greatest danger to *perestroika*. . . ."[22]

This, to be sure, only follows on from that extraordinary

[21] An account of this altercation can be found in Boris Shub, *The Choice* (1950), ch. 5, pp. 72-85; and also in *Encounter with a 60th Birthday* (1980).

The Soviet daily newspaper, the *Tägliche Rundschau* (in 1947) termed this affair, quite unhistorically, "the beginning of the East-West conflict in Berlin", and referred to me, quite undeservedly, as "the father of the Cold War. . . ."

[22] See Anatoli Strelyani, "An Editor Preaches 'Revolution'", in ENCOUNTER, September-October 1987, pp. 62-64. He has since (in the increasing "*glasnost* gap") been removed from his editorial post on *Novy Mir* (*Die Welt*, 20 October 1987, p. 29).

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speech which Gorbachov made in Khabarovsk (31 July 1986), on his visit to the Soviet Far East. There he, with unprecedented semantic elasticity, announced "a new revolution". It was not prefaced by any theoretical Marxist explication, and there was no reference at all to existing 70-year-old dogma. (How can you have, in Debray's phrase, "a revolution within a revolution"? Was this an echo of the Maoist heresy of a second "cultural revolution"? or even of the notion of "permanent revolution", coined by Parvus and Trotsky?) Gorbachov conceded: "*Nobody wants to live in the old way any more.*" This, recognisably, was the refrain from every pre-Revolution climate of opinion, and has accompanied all the great upheavals of modern history.

BUT WAS Marxism-Leninism no longer the "scientific" guide to the new way? Shouldn't the path forward be illuminated, as always, by the vaunted Marxist unity of theory and practice? Evidently not. "We must learn as we go along how to restructure. . . . We will carry out the restructuring on the march, as they say. . . ." Obviously the old revolution could be saved only by having—a new revolution.

> ". . . The current restructuring [Gorbachov explained] embraces not only the economy but all other facets of public life: social relations, the political system, the spiritual and ideological sphere, and the style and methods of the work of the Party and of all the cadres.
>
> Restructuring is a capacious word. I would equate the word restructuring with the word revolution. Our transformations and reforms . . . are a real revolution in the entire system of social relations, in the hearts and minds of the people, in the psychology and understanding of the modern period and, first of all, of the tasks engendered by rapid scientific and technical progress. . . ."[23]

This means—if it means anything at all, except the verbal accompaniment to a régime's desperate attempt to modernise at long last—that, after 70 years of revolution, there were still (in Marx's old phrases) all the *fetters on production* which had to be *broken asunder*. The old system could not be *tinkered* with or reformed in a *piecemeal* fashion.

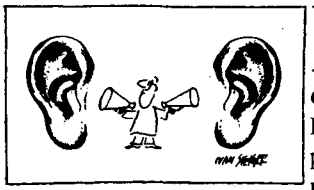
The West now had its best hopes and worst fears exposed at once. When Solzhenitsyn thundered against the evil in his Motherland and demanded utter change, a radical reformation, a total revolution, he was seen as an imprudent apocalyptic prophet who would only be pleased when chaos had come again. Presumably a better Russia could be had more cheaply than that. No need for dangerous topsy-turviness, for standing the world on its head. Compatibility and coexistence can be had more quietly, gradually, with a few springtime reforms at home and a few friendly agreements abroad. But, then, is Gorbachov—ambitious, impulsive, adventurous—the man for that season?

I do not mean to suggest, in any of this sketch of certain constant, repetitive factors in an ideological climate of opinion over some 70 years of "the Russian question", that it is yet another amusing case of *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*: that it is "always the same" and nothing ever really changes. The recurring elements may be a form of Pareto-like "residues", fundamental sentiments or expressions of sentiments deeply ingrained in modern attitudes. But in the course of onrushing events the winds of doctrine (and Pareto's justificatory "derivations") made a stormy impact on the old terrain.

More than that, institutions undergo vast transformations under the pressure of industrial development (and, in the case of the Gulag, arrested development); the very aspect of the urban and rural landscape becomes different. The Soviet Union of 1923, with Lenin's NEP and so much hopeful ideological investment on the part of Western sympathisers, was not "the same Russia" as in 1953, in which the Malenkov-Khrushchev succession (after Stalin's death on 5 March 1953) aroused so many rosy hopes in the Western observers forever scanning the horizon for signs of progress. Who could deny that history, whether taken to be tragic or simply tumultuous, made for substantive changes? Neither the economy nor society stands still; material forces alter populations and demographics, roads and factories, buildings and barracks, old cities and new towns. The concept of a static *status quo* is, in both East and West, specious and misleading; in the dynamics of modern history, hectic and innovative, there is rarely a still small point in time where a *status quo* can be "defended" or "maintained". Gross decisions made for net changes that were transforming a continental society—but always within a system whose political principles and Party guide-lines framed a basically unaltered structure of power.

I REPEAT: the repetitions, or the cycles or the spirals, that I have been underlining are not mechanical movements in a same and static context. It would be thoroughly mistaken to construe my argument as: nothing ever changes. A great many things change; but not the intellectual proclivity, on certain historic matters, to succumb to self-delusion and folly.

8. *The Cunning Truth*



HERE, THEN, IS OUR final paradox and irony, and it is truly a *List der Geschichte*. History, as T. S. Eliot said, has "many cunning passages", and the most cunning of them all is that in the East-West duel of our time the East should produce a leader, out of its invidious system of lies and disinformation—"a system of organised mendacity", Leszek Kolakowski has called it—who gives the lie (remorselessly, though unintentionally) to generations after generations of Western ignorance, naivety, and self-deception. Khrushchev told the truth in his historic speech to the 20th Party Congress in 1956; and it was the *New York Times* who had lied. Gorbachov is telling bitter

[23] My quotations are from the full mimeographed text of the Gorbachov speech in Khabarovsk (British Translation Services, Moscow Domestic Service in Russian, 31 July 1986).

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truths today, and exposes (in his end effect) the anodyne excuses and repetitious rationalisations with which the West has been preparing another round of self-betrayal based on self-deception.

For what Nikita Khrushchev and then Mikhail Gorbachov have been officially confirming, each in their own desperate and ambitious way of trying to maintain power and govern effectively, are only those truths which have been circulating in the West about the CPSU (B) ever since its liquidation of the democratic Constituent Assembly in October-November 1917.

(*1*) That the Party has never been representative of the people; it is isolated from the people and generally hostile to its interests.

(*2*) That its supreme leadership has often been irresponsible and adventurous, sometimes criminally so, as Khrushchev revealed about Stalin, and Brezhnev disclosed about Khrushchev.

(*3*) That its imperial foreign policy has been costly and over-extended.[24]

(*4*) That its politics were overshadowed by decades of illegal excesses against opponents and imagined oppositions, condemning millions of ordinary citizens to death in the slave-labour camps of the Gulag.

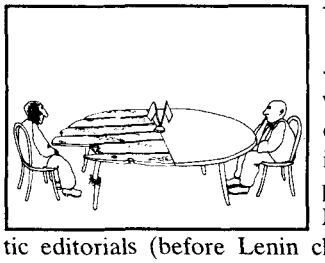
(*5*) That its economics have been an unrelenting formula for disaster: for failures in agriculture, gross inefficiency in industry, and rampant corruption in administration.

(*6*) That through its censorship and cultural controls, as well as its dogmatic vindictiveness against any intellectuals who showed signs of dissidence or heresy, it has made a wasteland of Russian art and literature.

(*7*) That certain immemorial vices of society—such as prostitution, bribery, theft, fraud, rape, alcoholism, etc., all once mythically ascribed to the endemic evil of "bourgeois behaviour" under "reactionary capitalism"—were not at all being eradicated by Marxist-Leninist planning, but were indeed flourishing feverishly as a Soviet sickness.[25]

(*8*) And, above all, that—as its deafening cry for *glasnost*, for "openness" and, at long last, truth-telling underlines—the whole system has been implausibly and mendaciously held together by fictions, falsifications, and figures fabricated out of whole cloth (when available).[26]

9. *Bolshevism for Beginners*



FEW OF US will be astonished by these truths. Some of them were obvious to Sukhanov, writing his diary in 1917-18 and recording the origins of totalitarian power, and to the young Maxim Gorky writing prophetic editorials (before Lenin closed his paper down). They were obvious 30 years later to David Dallin and Boris Nicolaevsky, recording in 1947 (that is, decades before Solzhenitsyn) the cruelties of the Gulag; were obvious to Arthur Koestler and Ignazio Silone in 1957 when they finally wearied of the Sisyphean labours of "telling the West" awful truths about Communism which it did not want to hear and, after a transient shock, promptly forgot.

In the beginning—and let me concede this, at the end—the early Western misperceptions, although formally related to the cyclical self-induced euphoria of the last several decades, were of little world-political importance. In the 1920s and '30s one faction or the other on the Left became disenchanted, split, engaged in dialectical polemics with heretical rivals; and it all took place in an ivory tower, to the exclusion of the great public. It so happens that I was taught in my New York school by my progressive chemistry teacher that science was a collective good that had to serve the community; and I was instructed to read all the pamphlets about the USSR's great achievement, Dnieprostroy. I believed it all, for a semester; and then learned better and disbelieved. It was probably, in those days, 50 years ago, all fairly innocent fun-and-games. One fellow-traveller, more or less, and his little pilgrim's progress: no big affair.

I do not want to be suspected of underestimating the prodigious efforts made, especially in the USA over several decades of polemical dissidence, to liberate young (and some old) men's minds from the thrall of Stalinist sympathies. It counteracted—albeit almost exclusively from the Left—certain pockets of academic, cultural and trade-union influence which had helped to create a surreptitious pro-Soviet atmosphere in corners of the US Establishment.[27]

But, by and large, it was a minor and provincial intermezzo on the large stage of history. "Stalin in Union Square" was

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[24] Khrushchev retracted a little in Finland and substantially in Austria; Andropov complained of the costs of Castro; and Gorbachov is making noises about Brezhnev's escapade in Afghanistan—all implying that the escalating cost of Soviet expansionism has been starving the Plan's budget for supplying basic civilian necessities and home-front social programmes.

[25] At the recent 40th Locarno Film Festival, a Russian film caused controversy—not least in Moscow, where critics continued to denounce *The Stain*, a work by the Soviet director Aleko Tzababze which, ironically enough, was set in Stalin's home territory of Georgia. Even in the atmosphere of *glasnost* it was criticised as representing only "a certain stratum of society with a cold pernicious atmosphere which cannot but provoke disgust, resentment and disapprobation. . . ."

Moscow film-reviewers fumed over other visions of the young being corrupted by "the influence of blackmailers, drug addicts, spongers. . . ."

An English critic, for a mistaken moment, thought this was "a predictably Russian view of the decadence of *Western* youth", but for the fact that it was a Russian film about Russians; in fact, "a gritty squalid drama of materialist music-mad youth in crisis. . . ." See Shaun Usher's report from Locarno, in the *Daily Mail* (London, 11 August 1987), p. 7.

[26] A convenient handbook for the documentation of many of these points has been assembled by George Urban in his special issue of *Survey* magazine (London, August 1987), entitled *Seventy Years after the Revolution: Social & Economic Rights in the Soviet Bloc.*

[27] There is a detailed account of this ideological episode in William L. O'Neill's *A Better World—the Great Schism: Stalinism and the American Intellectuals*, and in the pages of Sidney Hook's splendid book of memoirs, *Out of Step: An Unquiet Life in the 20th Century* (Harper & Row, 1987).

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not coterminous with the real Stalin in the Kremlin; and the dangers presented to the formidable American Republic by the small, isolated and ineffective US Communist Party—except for its affiliated spies in Los Alamos and on Pennsylvania Avenue—should be kept in proportion. European observers can be misled by the dramatic over-emphases of American dissident Left-wingers—for example, Irving Howe (editor of *Dissent* in New York):

> ". . . Let me just mention the question of Stalinism. There was a time when the Communists were a major force, a terrible problem, within the American left. That's over with—forever, I hope. So I'd say that whatever else, we of the democratic left did win the intellectual battle against Stalinism these past several decades."
>
> *New York Times Magazine* (17 June 1984, p.24)

I suspect that little local victories of this kind ill-equipped the American mind for the large power-political confrontation with the real "major force" and "terrible problem" of Stalin's totalitarian militancy in the surprising onset of the Cold War. "The battle" no longer involved rhetorical sword-play but hard foreign-policy commitments.

Obviously the ideological conflict in the age of superpowers is another and far more grievous matter, involving weapons, wars, and the fate of nations. Diplomacy has become volatile, jitteringly responsive to misdemeanours of the media and eccentricities of public opinion. Thus, alliances in the next years will shift and politicians are already pressing for yet another round of dramatic agreements to be quickly signed. Powers may be plunged into local conflict and then hasten to withdraw from the prospect of escalations. In sum, leaders of great nations, like those at the historic conference-tables of Yalta and of Potsdam, will be making decisions according to their lights.

But what if those lights, as they have proved to be in the past, are flickering and dim? I am not certain whether history really does offer a clear beam of illumination. But from what I have been trying to sketch of our recent world-political past, it seems to be a record of dire warning, a cautionary tale. The cycles of Western fantasy and fantasising evince graphic tell-tale symptoms of what I have called Western ideology's "hereditary disease".

Is IT, as Santayana said, that by not remembering the past we are condemned to repeat it? No; I suggest that by repeating the past we are condemning ourselves to remember—but alas! only in the tardy way that memory has served the pendulum-swings of utopian hope in a revolutionary age. We become aware of tragic truths only when it is too late to do anything about them. We disregard the old insights at the slightest seductive beckoning that history is offering something new and hopeful; and yes, *this time, different*. So it is that man's human capacity to learn is tempered by his animal aptitude to forget, for this appears to be the "categorical imperative" of a civilisation that is strong on making and short on thinking. Must illusions spring eternal: is amnesia man's fate?

A Walk In Winter

The snow records my journey,
opening dark foot-holes behind me,
crusting each rut and cranny
in the road ahead.
Above, branches suffer their white hairs
with dignity, like old age.

I am content in this stopped season.
It is not that summer is unbeautiful,
merely that my weather matches with January,
ends and not beginnings are my country.
Here the lean backbone of winter
gives nothing, asks nothing in return.

Feeling is locked in ice. Memory stiffens
to the narrow vista of the Christmas card.
These are the acres of the snowman
flattening himself into his background,
only the bearded muffler, the sugar-frosted hat
between him and obliteration.

Sudden light combs the dull sky.
Water rouses itself in pond and ditch,
begins to shake off winter. Somewhere
far down roots are about their business.
The year is on the move again, but I
am stalled in a white hush below the ice-cap.

Nicky Rice

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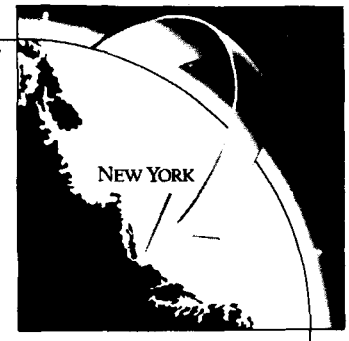

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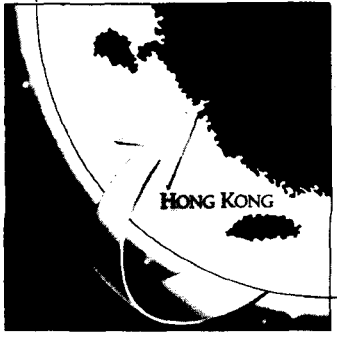

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Guy Malet de Carteret

Rainy Day

I APPROACHED the farm across the fields. It was dark. At each new field I had to walk in a little way and feel with my hands for any crop before walking across. The ground was slightly frozen and I could feel my breath on my hand when I bent down. The earth was crisp and the only noise was the crunch under my feet. It was easier to walk around on the path next to the hedge, but I preferred to head out into the open field and try and guess the corner where I knew the gate would be.

It was the middle of the school holidays and I had spent the days walking in the fields, out of the house, away from the depression at home. Dad had walked out. I knew he would. And now there was a strange quiet in the house. There were no longer any shouts of rage, just the sound of the TV to fill the empty space and break the stale alcoholic air. That was two months ago. Mum spent most of the time in the kitchen, sitting. At first she hid her drinking from me. She would pretend and start chattering to me in a fake jolly sort of way which made me feel uneasy. I didn't know how to reply to her.

Once I asked her why we always had to have sausages for dinner, and she started crying, slowly at first. Then she turned around and started to sob, her shoulders hunched up in a funny way. I stood looking at her shoulders moving up and down. I wanted to say I was sorry. I wanted to go up and hug her and to tell her that she didn't have to pretend any more, that we would get by, the two of us. But I just put my empty plate in the sink and closed the kitchen door behind me, thinking how much older she looked. Later, when I had turned out my light, she came and sat at the end of my bed. She sat there for a long time without saying anything, her hands on her lap. Again I felt I should say something but I didn't feel old enough. Then she leant forward, trying to find my face. She kissed me on my cheek, and I could smell wine on her breath. She left, leaving the door ajar, and I listened to her getting undressed before I fell asleep. Things seemed to get worse after. I spent more time in front of the TV and she spent more time in the kitchen drinking.

I opened the gate and stepped into the lane, then turned right. It was noisier now. My boots echoed on the tarmac. The sound seemed to bounce back from the darkness. Occasionally there was a rustle from the hedge. A bird or a rabbit, I couldn't tell. The road led to a small wood where the summer before I had found a frame for a swing. I had cut branches and tied them to the frame, making a camouflaged shooting-post from where I tried to pick off pigeons with my air-rifle.

I turned left on to the track which led to the farm. It was beginning to get lighter. The darkness seemed to turn in on itself. I could make out the dark glint of the reservoir below.

There was a light on in the building spreading a sickly glow into the farmyard. I stepped on to the orange square of light and looked into the kitchen. Martha was at the stove making tea. I could hear the radio tuned to the weather forecast.

"Up early with the birds this morning", she said as I entered.

"I woke up early", I said, not knowing what else to say.

I sat down at the table and watched her hands as she took down some mugs and turned off the stove. She moved uneasily. It was as if she had to think first before shifting her weight. On her feet she wore slippers, the kind that have no back, which scraped along the floor as she moved. Her feet seemed to spill out of the fur, and rose, missing out the ankles, into fleshy columns as thick as the table legs. An apron which reminded me of nursery curtains was tied at her waist by a scarf. She handed me a cup of tea, saying that Jim and the others would be here soon. Then she let out a sigh and sat down next to me.

"How are you getting on, then?" she said after a while.

"Fine", I said. I moved my feet closer to the bar-heater. "Though my back hurts a little", I added.

"Bound to for a bit", she said. "But you'll get used to it. Anyway it will be over soon and you'll be back at school."

I watched her hands take the mug up to her mouth. Then I looked back at the lino floor. It had begun to peel in places. Dirty brown bits between red and white squares. The thought of school seemed far away, as far away as the strange places being read out on the

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weather forecast. It was only three days ago that I applied for the job and only two days that I had been working. Everything seemed longer. My back hurt and I wondered whether I would last the week. I began to feel tired. I regretted that I had woken up early and hadn't stayed in bed longer.

I heard the windows of the back door rattle and then the scraping of boots before Jim came in. He smiled through his pipe and patted me on the back as he sat down. Martha got up to get him his tea.

"Bit of a frost out there this morning", he said to her back. I remembered the crunch of the fields earlier. Even that seemed far away.

"Forecast for rain this afternoon. That's all we need. Got to get them in by the end of the week or there'll be trouble", he added.

Martha didn't look at him. Instead she began to put a scarf round her head. A scarf of faded blue. She asked him if the cows were ready. Then she knotted the scarf twice under her chin. I silently prayed for rain, for a rest, while I watched Jim prepare his pipe with tobacco. There was a little bit of spittle on the chewed mouthpiece. At the tip it had faded to a colour that reminded me of bone. He wiped his mouth and I could hear the hairs on his chin. He was in no hurry when it came to his pipe. He lit his pipe and we waited for the others to arrive.

LOOKING AT JIM, I remembered the first time I had seen him. It was when I had gone to the farm to ask for work. He had approached me from one of the outhouses and I immediately sensed that something was odd about him, something not quite right.

The day before I had been out in the fields after rabbits. Ever since the day I had shot a diseased one I had been after one properly. It had cowered against the hedge, its ears pulled down along its back. It didn't move when I brought the gun close to its head. I told my father and he told me the name of the disease. He said that it was merciful to shoot it, that shooting it put it out of its misery, and stopped the disease spreading. Even so I felt somehow wrong when I rolled it into the hedge with the barrel of my gun and covered it with leaves.

I positioned myself next to a large warren and waited. Two fields across and sloping away from where I sat, they were planting cauliflowers. I watched the men, three of them, sitting behind the tractor bobbing up and down putting cauliflower plants into the ground. When the tractor reached the end of the field the planter was raised and the men got up. Then the tractor turned round so it pointed in the other direction. The planter was lowered. The men got on and the same thing started all over again. It suddenly seemed funny. I laughed. They weren't planting cauliflowers but hair. The tractor was really combing the bald scalp of the land and the men were planting hair roots between unploughed fields that wore wigs of green. At their backs a white scarf of seagulls flapped in the wind, then dropped to the ground, littering the earth like golf balls. It was then I decided to go and ask for work the next day. There wasn't much else to do, and the only reason why I was after rabbits was to get out of the house. Besides, I wanted to buy a bike, a racer like Jimmy Beard had, so I could ride to school without waiting for the bus.

I arrived at the farm around lunch-time. Nobody was about, so I decided to take a look in one of the sheds that made up a side of the farmyard. It was built of corrugated iron and was painted a dull red. There was no door, just a large opening at one end, with a central support made of stone. Weeds sprouted at the edge. It was dark inside and had a strange shut-up smell like a cupboard. It seemed hollow somehow, echoey. Machinery—some muddy, some clean—stood idle on the earth floor. I recognised a few items—the large potato-harvester at the back, a plough a little rusty—and made guesses as to what the others were used for. Above the machinery, approached by a ladder, was another floor where boxes were stacked on top of each other. I stepped forward and pulled at a lever on one of the machines. Nothing happened. I turned and saw a pile of bluish pellets. Rat poison, I thought. I went out into the yard again. I saw him as he stepped out of one of the buildings. He spotted me immediately and walked towards me, carrying a bucket.

"Snooping are we?" he said as he approached. He was a tall man but there was something odd about him. I noticed a pipe which stuck out at an angle from his mouth.

"No, I'm just looking", I said. "I'm interested."

"Are you? What can I do for you?" He had a flat, low voice. He stopped and looked down at me from a great height.

"I'm looking for work", I mumbled. I felt uncomfortable at feeling so small. I looked into the bucket and saw a mixture of vegetables. Bits of cabbage and carrots gave colour to the brown swill of potato peelings and other things. It smelt off, like blocked drains.

"Are you?" he said again. Then he continued to walk past me. I followed him. It was then that I noticed that he only had one arm. The spare arm of his coat was tucked into his pocket. I walked close behind him. He seemed all wellington boots which wobbled just below the knee.

"I thought I could help out. With the cauliflowers, I mean. Planting", I said. I watched the wellington boots.

"School holidays?" he said over his shoulder.

"Yes", I said. I quickened my walk so I came alongside the bucket.

We had come out of the farmyard and had turned right along the red corrugated shed. The stone of the yard gave way to concrete. It had a small gully running down the side, forming a drain at the end. To our left was the road running to the village. I heard a car pass.

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We approached a small building, not very tall, with a low wall in front that then ran back and joined the building on either side. Behind the slanted roof I could see an orchard with long uncut grass between the apple trees. The orchard was bordered by trees covered in ivy. And behind, fields.

All of a sudden I heard pigs grunting. Jim emptied the bucket over the wall, and started to uncoil a hose from a tap on the side of the building. I stepped on to a stone so that I could lean on the top of the wall and look over. I had never seen a pig in real life before. In a strange way, they looked almost human. I watched them feeding while Jim began to hose down the pen.

I thought that he had forgotten me until he handed me the hose and told me where to direct the spray. He took a stiff broom and climbed in, knocking the pigs out of his way with his knee. He put the handle to his shoulder and started to walk forward, leaning into it. Raising the broom every so often, he swept the muck towards a small hole in the wall. Then he walked back and started moving towards the hole again. When his back was turned I tried to get a reaction from the pigs by increasing the force of the water and spraying them where I thought their arsehole was, somewhere under their tails. But they were too busy sniffing for more food to move out of the way.

When he finished I asked him again about the job. He put the broom back and turned off the tap and then started to coil the hose. When he was done he turned round and looked at me and said nothing. It was as if I hadn't asked him before, and he was thinking about it for the first time. I looked up at him, trying to read his face. Then I felt my eyes searching for his other arm, seeking an answer. It could have been strapped to his chest or his back, if he had one, but I knew that was silly. Then I looked at his boots, for I felt he knew what I was thinking.

"It's hard work, you know", he said.

I looked up and saw that he was looking at the pigs. Some had gone back into the building, while others were still sniffing around.

"Think you can manage?" He turned and looked at me—not really at me, but over me. I nodded. With that he picked up the bucket, saying that he couldn't stand around talking all day.

"Be here at 5.30. If you do okay then it will be for a week, maybe eight days. It depends on the weather", he said, and headed back up to the farmyard.

I don't know why, but I looked up at the sky. Then I watched him, the bucket, the boots and the arm pass the red corrugated shed and turn the corner.

HENRI WAS THE FIRST to arrive. As he shut the kitchen door a small gust of wind disturbed the pipe-smoke that hung in the air. He said hello in French to Martha and Jim, then nodded to me. He stood leaning against the doorpost, his arms folded. Martha had told me that he was a labourer from France when I asked about the tattoos that covered his arms and rose above his collar on his neck. He had frightened me the first day I arrived for work.

Jim finished his tea and we went outside. It was lighter now, but the buildings were still dark. Paul and David arrived. I heard their voices and saw the glow of their cigarettes as they walked into the farmyard. I could tell by the way they walked that they were still half-asleep. We began to load the trailer with boxes of cauliflower plants while Jim drove the planter to the fields. When he returned we attached the trailer to the tractor. Jim told Henri to dig some more plants and for Paul, David and me to get on the back of the trailer. Martha had already gone to look after the cows.

I hadn't worked with David or Paul before. It was their first day. I knew that they lived in England. They told me that they were going back on the boat in a week or so's time. They asked me if I went to school and what my favourite subject was. Everybody asked me that. They said that they went to college, that they were going to be doctors. Then they started using long words. First one saying a word, then the other. I asked them what they were talking about. "Diseases", Paul said, and showed his teeth. I told them the one disease I knew. I told them about the rabbit.

"Well, what's it like then?", Paul said.

"It makes them go limp. It's like they are too scared to move", I said.

"No, not the rabbit", Paul said. "Planting cauliflowers."

We were still riding on the back of the trailer, driving past the football pitch. It had been closed down and the nets had been taken from the goal-posts. I had gone a couple of times with my father, and had stood watching the game on the sideline. The men used to smoke and pass whisky round. I remembered my father's whisky flask. My mother had given it to him for his birthday. It had his initials and the date on which she gave it to him.

"It's hard work", I said. "I haven't done much. I've only been working two days. First time", I added.

"Ours too", Paul said. He looked at David. David nodded towards Jim. He said they had told Jim that they had planted cauliflowers before. They needed to earn some money to pay for their trip home. They wouldn't be doing it otherwise.

"You better show us how it's done", Paul said.

I thought of Martha and her hands, and how she had shown me the first day. It wasn't difficult. It was just bending. A lot of bending every time the machine clicked. Henri was there too, at the other end of the seat. Martha was between us. I watched her hands putting plants into the ground. The three of us hadn't talked. We just bent down and put cauliflower plants into the earth every time there was a click. The only other sound was the seagulls. Martha only talked to me once after she told me how to plant. It was at the end of the day. I couldn't get off the planter so it could be raised and the tractor could turn round. I didn't have

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the strength. I just leant over till I fell off, and lay there on the ground, waiting for the tractor to get into position. "Don't worry", she said. "Everybody does that the first day." I felt relieved. I thought that in the silence they had been thinking that I couldn't do it, that I wouldn't last the week.

We pulled off the road and into the field. We took the trailer off and put the planter on. Then we loaded the planter with three boxes of cauliflower plants, one for each of us. I showed them where to put their feet. I showed them the wheel that moved round and clicked. I told them every time it clicked you had to put a plant into the hole. I told them it was better to put it in at an angle because when the planter moved forward it brought it upright. Martha hadn't told me that, but I told them anyway. I knew other things. I knew that it was better to vary the way you picked the plants out of the boxes. Either to grab a handful or just one, and to use different hands for taking the plants and for putting them in the hole. That way you didn't use your back the same way all the time.

"How do you think he did it?" David said to me. We had just finished one row of the field and had turned back. I was sitting in the middle. I let them sit on the ends so they could lean over and fall off if they wanted.

"Do what?" I said.

"His arm", David said.

"I don't know", I said. "It must have been an accident."

"He drives a tractor well for someone who only has one arm", Paul said.

"Of course it must have been an accident", David said. "But what accident? What type of accident?" he asked.

"Could hardly have been anything else", Paul said. "I mean, he couldn't have chopped it off out of a sense of duty." He turned to me. "In Japan they cut off their little fingers out of a sense of duty." I missed a click.

"Of course, he could have misjudged. Slipped", David laughed.

"Or was disloyal a lot", Paul said.

"Or it could have been out of love, an arm instead of an ear. Could you imagine Jim carrying his other arm to his loved one and laying it at her door?" David said.

They both laughed. I did a bit too, even though I didn't understand. That morning I laughed some more. I didn't really want to. I knew you were supposed to laugh at jokes even if you didn't understand. All morning Paul and David talked about Jim's arm. I was glad someone was talking as it made you forget about the clicks and about your back. But I wished it was about something else. I didn't want Jim to hear. I liked Jim. I liked helping with the pigs at lunch-time. And then after the pigs we'd go up to see his pigeons.

He kept them in one of the out-buildings. We had to climb ladders that went through a trapdoor in each floor—they stretched the whole length of the building. On the top floor, in a cage in one of the corners, were his pigeons. It seemed a private place as our feet sounded on the wooden floorboards. They began to flap around the cage as we got closer. The wall and floor became alive with shadows. I thought of the swing frame, of whether I might have shot at any of them. The cage as well as the floor was covered in shit.

Jim told me that he raced them. He never had a winner but one had come in third, he said. He showed me how to attach the ring to their legs. I'd watch him through the wire, talking to the birds. That was the only time Jim really talked. He didn't need another arm when he was with his birds. They liked him and let him pick them up and hold them. He'd hold them close to his face and call them by their names. Blue, Mister, Will, Jinx, Flyer. I couldn't tell the difference but Jim knew.

We stopped for lunch and picked up the trailer. We needed more plants which Henri would have dug. There was more traffic on the roads as we drove back to the farm. We had been working towards the farm as we planted, so we hadn't so far to go. Cars tried to pass us. David stood up and waved them on when the road was clear. He said Jim would have his hand full.

When we got to the farm, David and Paul asked if I wanted to go to the pub with them, that they would buy me a drink. The only way they would be able to get through the afternoon, they said. But I stayed. I had a routine with Jim.

In the afternoon we planted more cauliflowers. David and Paul talked about their college and their girlfriends. But mostly it was about Jim's arm. They said he could get an artificial one if he wanted. That it would be better. You could do things with a glove hand like hold a glass, they said. Then Paul said you didn't need two hands to drink. They laughed. A hook would be more useful, or one that had a prong so you could lift things. He could even fill his pipe with that, if he wanted.

It didn't rain that afternoon. But it rained the next day. It rained in the afternoon. David and Paul had come back from the pub a bit drunk. We had been planting for about an hour after lunch, and then it began to rain. We carried on at first as it was only a drizzle. But it got heavier and the sky blacker. The wheels spun up spray as we drove back to the farm.

The farmyard was covered in rain-water. One of the gutters was blocked, and the rain-water fell down in a heavy stream, smacking the stone. We drove into the building opposite the red corrugated shed and waited for it to stop. Jim stood in the doorway looking up at the sky. He was silhouetted, and all around him I could see the slanting rain dropping hard on to the stone, breaking up and splashing. Occasionally rain would come in and hit his boots and hit the earth floor, mak-

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ing a different sound. My hands were red from the cold and the rain. I could hardly feel them. I cupped them to my mouth and blew. I looked around and saw David wipe some wet hair away from his face. He swept it back over his head with his hand. Paul was sitting on some boxes, scraping them with a nail. We didn't talk. We just waited, glad of the rest. David looked up at Jim. And then he said it.

"What happened to your arm, Jim?" he said, Paul stopped scraping. Jim didn't turn round at first. David and Paul looked at each other.

"How did you lose it?" David asked.

Jim turned round and looked at him, then Paul, and lastly me. He took a few paces forward. I could see him better now. But I couldn't see his face properly. I thought then that he was going to hit David. I thought he was going to step forward and whack him one right in the face. But he just stood there. There was a pause. Nobody spoke. It seemed to last a long time. Jim took his pipe out of his mouth and looked at it.

"An accident. Some time ago", he said finally.

"What type of accident? A farming accident?" Paul asked.

"Yes, from a combine." He stopped, then went on. "Pulled me in. Just about took it off. Went right through muscle and bone. Everything."

"Must have hurt", Paul said.

"I haven't seen one of those combines, but I imagine one of those machines could easily do something like that", David said.

"Accidents were common in those days", Jim added.

He lit his pipe. He pulled at the pipe a couple of times and let out a stream of smoke. The smoke reached the end, then broke, swirling upwards in strands, and drifted towards the doorway.

"Can we see your arm?" David said. "Paul and I are medical students. We'd be interested on medical grounds. If you don't mind, that is."

Something hit me in the stomach when he said it. I felt my throat swallowing. He had gone too far this time, I thought. Jim would surely hit him. Paul got up from the boxes. Both of them looked at Jim. Something would happen.

Jim began taking off his coat. He walked over to the wall and hung it on a nail. There was a wet patch between his shoulder-blades that pointed down his back, making his shirt stick to his skin. He turned around, and I watched his hand unbutton his shirt. No, Jim, no, I wanted to say. No, you don't have to do it. If you knew what they had been saying you wouldn't do it. But I didn't say anything. I felt my heart beat faster. I suddenly realised that I wanted to see it too.

He finished undoing his buttons. Using his one arm, he twisted out of his shirt. I saw it then. It was small, not very long. It hung down about five inches. It had been cut above the elbow. He walked forwards towards David and it wobbled. Each step Jim took seemed to go up his legs, through his body, and out into that shaking piece of flesh. He stopped in front of David. Then David reached out a hand and touched it. It seemed to fold, to turn in on itself. He said nothing. We all said nothing. Jim walked over to Paul. His shirt was still tucked in and hung down the back of his legs. Paul also touched it, and said something to Jim. I didn't hear what he said. I was thinking about Jim and why he was doing this. Maybe he had heard us. Maybe our voices had carried over the noise of the tractor. Perhaps this was Jim's way of showing them who was who. Perhaps this was Jim's way of getting his own back. Somehow?

JIM TURNED towards me. My heart jumped and I felt the thump in my stomach again. Not me, Jim. I'm not as guilty as them. I didn't say anything. I only listened to them. You showed me the pigeons, Jim. I thought you trusted me.

"And how about you, John? I suppose you want to look too", he said.

He stopped in front of me. I was sitting on the trailer and his arm, his bit of an arm, was right in front of me, still wobbling. I didn't know what to say. I just looked at it. A piece of flesh but more than a piece of flesh. It was sort of knotted at the end and looked raw and reddish, wrinkled like new-born baby's skin. It looked unformed, something not complete, something that might grow. But I knew it couldn't. What was missing had been ripped away.

"Touch it", he said. I didn't move. I just looked, and felt the saliva in my mouth.

"Go on, touch it. It won't bite." He turned his head to look at David and Paul, and laughed. David and Paul laughed too. Touch it, they said.

I lifted my arm and stretched out my hand. I knew it was wrong but I was curious too. It felt soft, slightly warm, moving back at my touch, offering no resistance.

We finished planting the cauliflowers within the week. It didn't rain again. We didn't talk, Paul, David and I. Maybe Jim had heard us and wanted us to stop talking about it. I never knew. We just planted in silence. It was like the silence in the red corrugated shed. It was like the silence when you put your head under water in the bath. I didn't hear the seagulls. I didn't hear the clicks. Something had changed.

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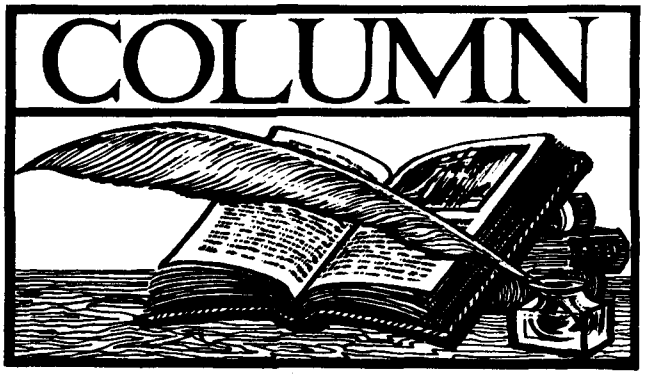

"HELLO. I'm from the CIA." The speaker was my neighbour at an official luncheon in Washington—a dark-suited man in early middle age, with heavy-framed spectacles, a blueish chin, and wiry slate-grey hair. He could have been an Associate Professor of Mathematics or Political Science. In fact, he was an intelligence analyst. We discussed foreign policy throughout the meal.

I'd tried to look unstartled by his frankness: but the contrast with Britain had been a shock. "I'm Carteret, from Six. D'you know Worrall, from Cheltenham, and Fenwick-Jones from Five?" Except in private, few such greetings are heard at London diplomatic functions. Even former secret servants, in my experience, tend to be reticent. They may admit to their past employment; but they censor all talk of operations. Peter Wrights are wrong, and rare.

In saying this, I don't mean to endorse all the British Government's actions against *Spycatcher*. Whatever the courts may make of the legal position, there's *prima facie* absurdity in forbidding the media to repeat allegations and names already public, and known for a certainty to the *KGB*. At times in recent months, the British have been treated like children or the citizens of a repressive republic; and they're right to feel insulted and annoyed.

The row that erupted before Christmas was a further irritant. The BBC's Radio 4—a voice of sanity and civilisation unique in broadcasting—had planned three programmes on the security and intelligence services. The first was to discuss their role, the second their accountability, and the third their constant dilemma: the tension between security and the public's right to know. The programmes' editor is a loyal, sound, and experienced producer; their writer and presenter is a moderate and responsible journalist. The contributors they canvassed included senior statesmen, retired secret servants, and a current employee of the Government's electronic eavesdropping centre, GCHQ. All were people previously identified in print or on the air. Several of the former spooks and counter-spooks told their ex-employers, who seem not to have objected. But when *The Daily Telegraph* previewed the first programme, in its "Peterborough" gossip column, the Downing Street fertiliser hit the fan. A catch-all injunction not only halted transmission of the programmes, but banned any broadcast mention of former spooks' names. And since earlier injunctions, in the Wright case, have been invoked against not only their addressees but also other newspapers, the latest ban could theoretically apply to the press as well as to the BBC. It may now be illegal, in fact, to name Peter Wright, Cathy Massiter, or even Roger Hollis—let alone Philby, Blunt, Maclean, Burgess, *et al*. See you in jail.

Some, of course, may breathe a sigh of bored relief at the prospect of an end to schmuckraking—of a time when the Nigels all go West, and the Chapmen Pinch no more. But the issues at stake here outweigh the risk of tedium. Broadly, they're just what the BBC programmes tried to tackle: how to control the secret services; how to keep essential secrets; and how to preserve the maximum freedom of information and speech.

In these respects, my CIA acquaintance knows where he stands. He has no more qualms about identifying himself than Langley has about its nameplate. If one day he hopes to publish his memoirs, there's a procedure for vetting them. If he oversteps the mark and reveals secrets, he faces heavy penalties. But citizens, equally, have the Freedom of Information Act.

Compare all that with Britain. Here, until very recently, the very existence of the Security and Secret Intelligence Services was officially denied. No serving member of them publicly admits his identity: hence various euphemisms in *Who's Who*. All now have been promised a virtual ombudsman to hear grievances and worries; but there seems no routine procedure for editing officers' manuscripts; and the Official Secrets Act seems likely to be tightened up. Parliament can never be as autonomous as Congress; and a British Freedom of Information Act is still merely a gleam in libertarians' eyes.

THE RESULT IS unsatisfactory—and from opposite points of view. From that of the Government, the Wright affair must have seemed an infuriating mess. *Spycatcher* is an absorbing read; but its errors are manifest, and few of its ancient allegations can have been a surprise to professionals, East or West. The book's real offence is its existence, tending to *encourager les autres*. And, short of sending an SAS kidnap team to Tasmania (which might have tempted the French or the Israelis), the Government's only hope of stopping *Spycatcher* was by the tortuous litigation it chose. Even that quite soon failed to plug American, Irish, Chinese, and other outlets: so the upshot was the biggest publicity campaign financed by taxpayers since the Woolton Pie advertisements and *Careless Talk Costs Lives* posters of World War II.

From the public's viewpoint, the Government's efforts have looked costly and ineffective, but also a threat to free speech. Against the duty to keep professional secrets, some would plead the duty to reveal wrongdoing. If a service seems to be acting illegally, if its head is suspected of treachery, are serving officers to keep mum? And if not, to whom can they safely talk? They may be wrong, or obsessional, or even mad: but their dilemma is real. Nor can the public's worries be appeased by internal inquiries or Ministerial assurances—*a fortiori* when it's alleged that Ministers themselves have been deceived. Finally, when the cat, however mangy or rabid, is out of the bag in one country, to suppose it can be concealed from another is to misunderstand the modern world.

The double dilemma is compounded by a social change. Cricket only works (if then) when people abide by the rules.

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If the rules require gentlemanly behaviour, any cad can wreck the game. And, as the early spy novelists were always insisting, "The Great Game" is inescapably dirty—hardly an occupation for gentlemen at all. So codes of reticence which once kept the spotlight off the twilight world are increasingly breached; and public curiosity, whetted by films and novels, sharpened by fear, and deepened by a sense of impotence, grows ever more acute. Faced with disloyal disclosures, officialdom clams up further, while the press and the public call for more.

The sensible solution, as so often, is surely to combine greater rigour with greater liberality. People in sensitive posts should have tougher positive vetting, and face dire sanctions if they break their trust. Machinery should be established to make the secret services more accountable—perhaps to Privy Councillors, perhaps to some other committee of the great, the good, and the shrewd. Officers with grudges, fears, or suspicions should have direct access to it, if necessary bypassing departmental or other heads. At the same time, secrecy should be defined more narrowly. If "need to know" must be the basis for internal security, the criterion for keeping the truth from the public should be "the need not to know". In an educated democracy, more information should be unclassified, not less.

The reason, paradoxically, is not to gratify public or press curiosity, but to make "the firm" itself more efficient. Reading *Spycatcher*, I'm as much in the dark as ever about the Hollis affair. Tinker, tailor, soldier, spy? Who knows? But one impression certainly lingers: fools can be almost as troublesome as moles.

HOW NEEDLESS SECRECY can encourage folly is very clear from official papers recently released under the Thirty Year Rule. These are the archives of British reactions to the so-called "relaunching of Europe" in the mid-1950s. Taken together, they document an extraordinary story of incomprehension, misjudgment, would-be duplicity, and intellectual incoherence. I find it hard to believe that these could have survived public scrutiny. As it was, Britain's brilliant Civil-Service mandarins made all the wrong recommendations behind closed doors, fumbling and stumbling in the dark.

You may remember the context. At the end of August 1954, the French National Assembly finally rejected, on a mere procedural motion, the Treaty that would have established a European Defence Community uniting the conventional armed forces of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, all already linked in the European Coal and Steel Community. The Defence Community project had been seen as a further stage on the way to political unity; and parliamentarians from the six countries concerned had drafted a political treaty to that end. The Defence Community's defeat looked at first like the death of all hopes for greater unity: but within a year the same six countries had resumed their efforts. Meeting at Messina in June 1955, they set in motion the process that led in 1957 to two new Treaties, establishing Euratom and the European Economic Community—the "Common Market" which Britain eventually joined in 1973, after two vetos from General de Gaulle. By then it was too late to help shape the Community's basic outlines: the British had to put on ready-made garments "off the peg". No wonder they later complained about the fit.

With hindsight, one could argue that Britain should have joined from the beginning—or even in 1950, when the Schuman Plan first mooted a Community for coal and steel. I certainly argued that at the time; but I realised very soon how great were the psychological obstacles. In the mid-1950s, Britain was still one of Europe's richest countries. Only in 1955 did most of her European competitors regain their pre-War level of wealth. In aircraft design and production, in atomic power, Britain was still a world leader. "The winds of change" had yet to blow through the Commonwealth in Africa; the 1956 Suez crisis and its attendant indignities had not yet occurred. The Defence Community having failed, there was no certainty that the Messina project would succeed. And British public opinion was largely indifferent to continental Western Europe. Attention was focused on America, on East-West relations, and on the Middle East. In Europe, what most Britons wanted was a slightly improved *status quo ante bellum*. They saw no point in unification. Co-operation was enough.

The Civil Service position-papers reflect these attitudes as vividly as an old newsreel. When a British official was kindly invited to take part in the committee work which followed the Messina meeting—essentially to prepare for a new Treaty—Britain's official acceptance described the task as "studies" and stressed the need to avoid reduplicating what was done by OEEC. So much for incomprehension. The essential aim of the Six was political unification: economic integration was simply a detour round the road-block of defence. Britain treated the project as primarily economic, and took part in the "studies" only until the end of the year.

WHEN THE "STUDIES" began to look serious, British eyes turned to France. The UK Embassy in Paris reported that the French were likely to wreck the project, as they had wrecked the Defence Community. So much for misjudgment. But would-be duplicity was part of British thinking too. If the Six were to form a European Common Market without Britain, it would be a powerful competitor; and British membership at that time seemed out of the question. Provided Britain said so, would the project not fall by the wayside? For a while, Whitehall thought it would: but then came a horrid doubt. What if the project were to carry on regardless? Perhaps the French could be relied upon as saboteurs.

In the end, of course, the Six went ahead—and Britain proposed to establish around their Common Market an industrial "Free Trade Area" comprising the other members of OEEC. If the Six had been privy to Whitehall's earlier discussions, they might have been tempted to see the Free Trade Area plan as another attempt at sabotage. For some of its supporters, it may have been: but its real achievement was to open British eyes to the continental market. When de Gaulle's Government finally killed the plan, Britain none the less formed the smaller EFTA, a seven-nation free trade area

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alongside the Six. Both were stages in Britain's slow move towards Common Market membership; and the paradox today is that the Community survives inside a broader industrial free-trade arrangement similar to that which Britain originally proposed.

ARE THE DEBATES of the 1950s, then, merely far-off battles long ago? Not quite. The worst feature of Whitehall's reaction to Messina was not misunderstanding the Six, misjudging the French, or attempting duplicity: it was failing to think coherently.

One of the documents now publicly available is a report from October 1955 which lists four "decisive considerations" against membership of a future Common Market. Two of them are familiar: it would weaken links with the Commonwealth; and it would tend towards further integration and ultimately perhaps to political federation, which public opinion would not accept. So far, so typical. But the other two arguments, spelled out in close proximity, are: first, that a European Common Market would be contrary to Britain's pursuit of world-wide free trade; and, secondly, that it would involve the removal of protection for British industry. Reasoning of this sort, from a very eminent mandarin, recalls the Irish barrister: "M'lud, my client never assaulted the victim, and anyway he didn't hit him very hard."

Has British thinking about unity in Europe progressed from this primitive confusion? In many respects, yes. Britain now warmly endorses the principle of a fully Common Market by the end of 1992. In a Community of twelve with some recalcitrant members, she even sees the point of majority voting. The British Labour Party has tacitly dropped its objections to membership, and party differences now concern how, what, and when—not whether.

And yet, despite such progress, Britain still too often poses as the only member State in step. On technology, on pollution, on space research, on farm policy, and on the Community budget, the Government seems constantly tempted to overdo its splendid isolation, and to underplay the interests it shares with its partners. Perhaps the aim is to court popularity at home by standing up to spendthrift foreigners. If so, it seems sadly mistaken. Grudging attitudes seldom pay—whether on European unity, on public information, or on the pensions offered to retired counter-spies.

M

Mouse

She was terrified of mice.
When the small brown ball grew tiny feet
and hurled itself across the room
to the skirting-board, she climbed on a chair
and screamed. (Mice run up legs after all.)
Next time it perched as if for a photograph
on the old dog's water bowl
and she drew her feet up off the floor.
Over the weeks they both grew bolder
but though she thought of painless ways to kill it
she couldn't imagine her life without the mouse:
it did her a service—cleaning up crumbs,
stopping the gap of her loneliness
and every morning when she scanned the boards
for scamperings, its presence seemed to quicken her.

Her mother was coming home to die,
her father said. She wept all down the motorway
and on arrival felt too scared to go upstairs.
(For death gets up your skirts—
mothers are permanent; hers couldn't *die*).
Each day there was less of her to lift;
the face she knew so well matured into a mask
and she loved it more; hollows, like droppings,
appeared in her chest. Her rings grew loose;
death's twitch and scuttle became familiar
and she was proud to hold the spoon of jelly,
that she knew wouldn't make any difference,
to bathe her high forehead
and to brush her thin white hair—proud
to participate in giving birth to death.

And now they are almost inseparable.

Felicity Napier

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The Philosopher's Flowers

John Stuart Mill as Botanist—By SIMON CURTIS

NEAR A municipal cemetery in Provence is an "Avenue John-Stuart Mill". Indeed, there is also a *lycée*, as well as a rather ghastly *résidence* (a high-rise council housing complex), named after the English philosopher. This celebration turns out to stem from no abstract liberalism on the part of a French civic authority, however utilitarian the design of the *résidence*, for Mill spent much of the last fifteen years of his life in retirement in Avignon.

In 1858 his beloved wife of seven years, Harriet, died at the Hotel de l'Europe in the town, during the early stages of a post-retirement continental holiday the couple had embarked on, and was buried in the big cemetery in Saint Véran, a suburb to the east of Avignon, just beyond the walls. The Carrara tombstone bears Mill's long and moving tribute to her:

> "Her great and loving heart, her noble soul, her clear, powerful, original and comprehensive intellect made her the guide, the support, the instructor in goodness as she was the sole earthly delight of those who had the happiness to belong to her . . . her influence has been felt in many of the greatest improvements of the age and will be in those still to come. Were there even a few hearts and intellects like hers this earth would already become the hoped-for heaven. . . ."

Immediately after Harriet's death, Mill purchased a small suburban villa from whose veranda he could see the cemetery. Every day he visited her grave, and in 1873 he was laid to rest beside her. One can still go to the cemetery, with its ilex, cypress and oleander, to pay respect to the well-tended grave, surrounded by a low hedge of laurel. The *résidence* towers, however, where he once lived: his house was demolished around 1960—an action that provoked many protests, including an indignant article by the Avignon novelist Henri Bosco.[1]

Avignon might at first glance seem to be a curious resting-place for a very English thinker of Scottish ancestry, employee of the East India Company, logician, radical journalist and political theorist, utilitarian and intimate of Benthamite circles in London in the early decades of the 19th century. Yet Mill became deeply conversant with contemporary French liberal ideas; he was a correspondent and financial helper of Auguste Comte, and he wrote in Victorian periodicals on the thought of the French Enlightenment. France, which seems to have played an important imaginative role in his development, was a country where he could find relaxation (in so far as he ever relaxed) and the happiness of release from the straight, narrow, and exacting path of furthering the cause of England's liberal reform.

Mill's education at the hands of his father is notorious for its unremitting rigour, intensity and, I suppose, effectiveness. But in 1820 Mill was sent to spend a year in France under the guardianship of Sir Samuel Bentham, the engaging and colourful brother of Jeremy Bentham, the famous utilitarian philosopher (and a close associate of James Mill). A man of organisational and inventive genius, Samuel was the creator of the Panopticon, that centralised circular architectural scheme which Jeremy Bentham advocated for prisons; Samuel had even built a version of it when supervising a shipyard in Russia, where he spent some time as a high-ranking naval advisor to the Emperor. He also designed a flotilla of light-weight boats mounted with shell-firing cannon, which enabled the Russians to defeat the Turks at Liman in 1788.

Back in England, however, Samuel's projects to reorganise the country's naval dockyards had met with such opposition that in 1814 he decided to retire to a *château* between Montauban and Toulouse, and it was here that the fourteen-year-old Mill came for a year's furlough from the confines of his education. One gets a sense of Sir Samuel as a broad-minded and thoughtful "uncle", doing his best to make Mill a balanced and happy human being. The lively, intelligent, unconventional Bentham family seems to have tried to bring the bookish youth out of himself; even to the extent of locking the library. Country walks, Franconi's circus in Toulouse, singing, dancing, piano and fencing lessons (at which Mill scarcely shone), bathing in the Garonne before breakfast, a tour in the Pyrenees—Mill later described it as "the free and genial atmosphere of continental life".

[1] Henri Bosco's article in *Les Nouvelles Littéraires* (December 1961) is quoted in full in L. Gerin, "L'amitié entre Henri Fabre et Stuart Mill et la destruction de la maison de ce dernier, stigmatisée par l'écrivain Henri Bosco", *Bulletin des amis d'Orange* (No. 84, 1981).

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In his *Autobiography*, Mill remarks on three things that impressed him with respect to France.[2] One is a matter of social intercourse:

> "Neither could I then appreciate the general culture of the understanding which results from the habitual exercise of the feelings, and is thus carried down into the most uneducated classes of several countries on the Continent, in a degree not equalled in England among the so-called educated, except where an unusual tenderness of conscience leads to a habitual exercise of the intellect on questions of right and wrong . . . but I even then felt . . . the contrast between the frank sociability and amiability of French personal intercourse, and the English mode of existence in which everybody acts as if everybody else . . . was either an enemy or a bore."

The second resulted from his studies there:

> "The chief fruit which I carried away from the society I saw, was a strong and permanent interest in Continental Liberalism, of which I ever afterwards kept myself *au courant*, as much as English politics. . . ."

The third was the landscape. He went with the Benthams into the Pyrenees:

> "This first introduction to the highest order of mountain scenery made the deepest impression on me, and gave a colour to my tastes through life."

It was at this time that Samuel's twenty-year-old son George introduced the young Mill to botany, a hobby he ardently pursued for the rest of his life.

HE COULD NOT HAVE HAD a better tutor, for George Bentham was to become the finest systematic botanist of 19th-century England. After returning to London in 1827 to act as his uncle's secretary, and writing a formidable volume on logic, George went on to publish a number of important works of systematic taxonomy, as well as an extremely popular *Handbook of the British Flora* (1858) which seems to have been the standard work for the aspiring Victorian amateur naturalist.[3]

The *Handbook* is a good example of the vast number of natural history reference books which are a feature of the period: on ferns, shells, mosses, butterflies, fossils, flowers, insects—more or less everything that could be found in nature. As David Elliston Allen in his pioneering work, *The Naturalist in Britain* (1976) and Lynn Barber in her lively *The Heyday of Natural History* (1980) have documented, the study of nature excited many a middle-class lady and working artisan at the time. Indeed, the mania among Victorians for naturalising and collecting sometimes sounds like a kind of imperial colonisation on the home front:

> "Every Victorian drawing-room, it seemed, boasted a fern case, a shell collection, and an aquarium; every well-brought-up young lady could reel off the names of twenty different ferns and fungi. 'Evenings at the Microscope' or magic lantern lectures on the Life History of the Bee were among the most fashionable forms of after-dinner entertainment, and all the newspapers ran natural history columns in which readers debated the burning issues of whether swallows could hibernate, or whether toads could live for centuries immured in blocks of stone. Clergymen dreamed of writing natural histories of their parishes in imitation of Gilbert White, and artisans hoarded their pennies to buy the *Entomologists' Weekly Intelligencer*. By the middle of the century, it was impossible to visit the seaside without tripping over parties of bizarrely-dressed ladies and gentlemen busily combing the rock-pools to find new 'specimens' for their aquaria at home. . . . Natural history . . . represented rational amusement, spiritual enlightenment and outdoor recreation."[4]

Mill, then, was an exemplar of one of his age's most remarkable enthusiasms. And being Mill, he went at his leisure pursuit hammer-and-tongs. His constant botanising in England and Europe was eventually to result in six articles he wrote for the *The Phytologist*, a Victorian natural history magazine. By the end of his life he had amassed a large herbarium—volumes with plants pressed between loose leaves, each specimen systematically labelled with its Latin name and a record of the place and date of collection. Ten of these volumes can still be seen in the Museum Requien in Avignon; they comprise about 1,000 plants. Many other volumes—four packing-cases full—were donated to Kew Gardens by Mill's stepdaughter Helen after his death. From the Avignon herbarium we can build up a picture of how energetic a botanist Mill was; and discover just where he went when collecting plants in Provence.

WE LEARN FROM M. St J. Packe's *The Life of John Stuart Mill* (1954) that at the age of twenty (in 1826), when he was making friends with young radical thinkers like Grote and Austin, Mill was already undertaking botanising walks outside London. He was in the Lakes in 1831, and in Cornwall and the New Forest the next year, just before he met Harriet for the first time, and the circle of Unitarian intellectuals with which she and her first husband, John Taylor, associated. Not long afterwards, in 1835, during a trip to the continent for six months' convalescence, in company with Harriet, Mill saw Rome and Naples, and botanised in the Alps; the spring flowers of Southern Italy were to be the theme of his first *Phytologist* paper. In 1840, Caroline Fox met the Mill family at Kensington Square and noted Mill's library and "immense herbarium". In 1842 there was a walking tour in France. Then, in the two years

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[2] J. S. Mill, *Autobiography* (London, 1873), pp. 58-59, 61, 57.

[3] Among George Bentham's publications are: *Catalogue des plantes indigènes des Pyrénées et de Bas-Languedoc avec des notes et observations* (1826); *Handbook of the British Flora* (1858); *Flora Hongkongensis* (1861); *Flora Australiensis* (1863-78); and, in collaboration with Sir Joseph Hooker, *Genera Plantarum* (1862-83).

[4] This is from the blurb to Lynn Barber's *The Heyday of Natural History*—but it is a perfectly satisfactory blurb.

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that elapsed between John Taylor's death in 1849 and Mill's marriage to Harriet, Mill seems to have botanised doggedly in the English home counties—doubtless, among other things, to keep his mind off his frustrating situation. At last married, and settled with Harriet in their house at Blackheath, Mill, we learn from Packe's biography, used to naturalise on Sundays:

> ". . . he strode off into the country, his tin box for botanical specimens under his arm, and by combining rail and foot travel he went far afield. He would eat a healthy lunch at an hotel, and return at nightfall fresher than he had started, after walking sometimes more than twenty miles."

In 1854, again convalescent, he undertook a gruelling excursion by mule in Sicily during a continental trip that took in his old haunts in the south-west of France, Rome, Naples and Corfu. This is how Packe describes it:

> "He resolved to make a tour of southern Sicily, a very rugged undertaking. He hired a muleteer and his two animals. They made a curious group as they set out. The soberly clad philosopher of nearly fifty, a copy of Theocritus and of Dante in his pocket, dangling his long legs against the flanks of his bony beast: the swarthy Sicilian following, driving the second mule piled high with books and baggage. Mill was not an experienced rider, and before they had gone far his enthusiasm began to wane. The roads were unspeakable; the rain drenching and continuous. The peculiar amble of his steed was worse than anything he had ever dreamed. A few miles, and he was in agony. A few more, and he was compelled to get down and stumble painfully on foot through all the puddles and the mud. After the midday halt he changed places with the guide, perching himself on top of the baggage as a cushion. He got little sleep at the inn where they stopped the night, on the hard boards covering a rickety trestle bed. He arose in the morning scarcely able to move . . . but he consoled himself with the consideration that for a man apparently dying of consumption only six months previously, his performance was surely a good promise for the future. 'It will', he asserted gamely to his wife, 'be an incomparable excursion if only I am able to get on with it.'"

They ate nasty yellow bread, and Mill took charge of the teapot. A poultice of lettuces and rice was prescribed for a thumb infected by a thorn.

> "He began to make light of his discomforts. 'Another flea-hunt night and morning', he laconically recorded on March 10th: . . . '(NB in the middle of this sentence I stopt and caught one).'"

This may be the only joke ever recorded by Mill.

During this holiday, he lost his plant-collecting box in northern Italy. In 1857 he confined himself to botanising in the Lakes and the Peak District.

The next year, Mill retired from being a head of department in the East India Company, where he also declined a seat on the Council. He and Harriet had long debated the idea of living abroad. His proneness to ill-health doubtless encouraged this idea, but it may also be an index of the pull of France and Mill's happy experience of travel—fleas notwithstanding. (He had earlier prospected for a house in Brittany.)

It was during their post-retirement journey to Nice that Harriet died in Avignon. The house which Mill bought near the cemetery was a small, five-roomed, ochre-coloured villa, with rounded russet tiles on the roof; its drive, reached through a simple iron gate between two pillars, was bordered by cypresses and plane trees.[5] At night, nightingales sang in the trees around. From late in 1858 this house, the Hermitage de Monloisier, became Mill's French home. He was looked after by his stepdaughter Helen (his constant companion, often on botanising excursions too), and it is here that Mill must have composed and revised the works of his mature years, of which he always insisted Harriet was joint author; among them, *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), the revised *Utilitarianism* (1863), *The Subjection of Women* (1869), and the *Autobiography* (1873).

MILL FIRST MET Jean-Henri Fabre in the Museum Requien, the year after Harriet's tragic death. Fabre, then aged 36, was the physics and chemistry teacher at the Imperial College of Avignon, and worked part-time at the Museum. The famous entomologist had not yet begun to write the popular school manuals, the science books, and the ten volumes of his *Souvenirs Entomologiques* (1879-1909) which were to bring him world-wide recognition.[6] But, working himself up from humble country origins with stubborn perseverance, Fabre had gained his *licence* in mathematics, physics and biology, and in 1855 successfully submitted a doctoral thesis in biology at the Faculté des Sciences in Paris—all while he was busy as a schoolmaster, first in Ajaccio in Corsica, and then, from 1853, in Avignon. He had also begun his meticulous observations of insect life (as well as conducting experiments on madder dyes), and had received the Prix Montyon from the Académie des Sciences in 1855. Fabre had a rising reputation, though no tangible material rewards, by 1859. In *The Origin of Species*, which came out in that year, Darwin refers to him as "the inimitable observer".[7]

Fabre and Mill became firm friends, and soon they began to collaborate in a project for a book—no less than a *Flora of Vaucluse*. It is a tribute to Mill's extraordinary energy that the busy philosopher, political thinker, reformer and, from 1866 to 1868, Member of Parliament, should have regretted that no such reference-work existed, and acted to put this right

[5] Packe notes one sort of tree, other writers, such as Jules Veran and Yves Delange, others. Packe says the house was white, others ochre.

[6] Fabre's works were translated into many languages, proving particularly popular in Japan and Russia. The English translations (by B. Miall) may still be found in second-hand bookshops. By the time Penguin Books published Fabre's *Social Life in the Insect World* in 1937, the book had been through seventeen successive hardback impressions (between 1911 and 1929).

[7] Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (1859; 1902), p. 64.

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(though, according to Fabre, the idea for the project was his own),[8] and shows how greatly botany occupied Mill during the last thirteen years of his life.

A sample from the ten loose-leaf herbarium volumes at the Museum Requien gives an idea of Mill's apparently indefatigable botanising in the region. The earliest references are to plants gathered in 1859, the year after Harriet's death. We know that in the winter Mill was at Blackheath; *On Liberty* was published in February, and in May he attended the Political Economy Club. But by the end of that month he was at his new house in the Midi, arranging for the headstone for Harriet's grave to be shipped from Italy. Although he and Helen made a trip to the Cevennes and the Pyrenees, by that summer he was botanising in Vaucluse: around the house at Saint-Véran on the outskirts of Avignon; at Montfavet, a few miles to the south-east, on the banks of the Durance which flows into the Rhône just south of Avignon; and among the *garrigues* of Villeneuve across the Rhône at Les Angles—a rocky area, where Fabre also studied insect life, especially the *scarabée sacré*. We find a *Stipa* ("Fontaine de Vaucluse", May), *Imperata* ("Thickets by Durance near Avignon"), and a *Clematis flammula* ("Garrigues near Villeneuve"), both in June.

In April and May 1860, Mill was in Spain and the Pyrenees, on an expedition which furnished him with his five other *Phytologist* articles, on "The Botany of Spain" (August, October, November and December 1861, and February 1862). In addition, we find in the herbarium plants from Carpentras, Aiguemortes, St Rémy and Les Baux, dated from September to December 1860. The sample also contains specimens collected at Malham Cove in Yorkshire in June, and "between Sandwich and Pegwell Bay" in September.

In 1861, Mill seems to have spent a lot of time in Avignon, among other preoccupations revising *The Subjection of Women*. Specimens were gathered from the upper and lower slopes of Mont Ventoux—the grey, rocky mountain to the north-east of the town (made famous by Petrarch's description of the view from the top in the 14th century) which Mill climbed two or three times a year. In that year George Eliot and G. H. Lewes visited Harriet's grave at Saint-Véran.

We know that Mill left Avignon in January 1862 for Italy, Corfu, and Greece. In March he was in Athens and the Peloponnese, returning to the Hermitage via Constantinople, the Danube, Vienna, and Switzerland. The summer plants for 1862 in the herbaria duly include specimens from Sparta, Colonus, Achaia, Parnassus and the Salzburg Alps. But in September he was busy again around Montfavet, Le Pontet, Venasque, and Courthezon; there is, for example, an *Evegrestis Poindes* ("Sandy field near Courthezon") collected in October.

April and May 1863 appear to have been another busy time, with plants recorded from the same sites as 1862, as well as specimens from Bedarrides, Mornas, and the Bollène hills, all beyond Orange to the north. There is a *Hyssopus officinalis* ("Precipitous hill near Piolenc", September). One plant he noted as "copiously naturalised on the boulevard at Avignon"—the *Solidago glabia*, a species of golden rod.

Mill was once more on Mont Ventoux and on the hills near Apt, to the east of Avignon, in May and June 1864. *Crepis nicaeensis*, French hawk's beard, was gathered at the "foot of sandy hill near Piolenc". A new friend, the young aristocrat and radical, Lord Amberley, visited Mill that year in Avignon; Helen was later to become godmother to Amberley's son—Bertrand Russell.

In 1865 the tide of political affairs in England caught up with Mill. He was invited to stand as an MP in the forthcoming election, and accepted, on condition that he would not be involved in the campaign. He duly arrived in London in July, just in time for the voting, and won the seat for Westminster. Yet there are specimens for May and June in the sample; and we learn from Fabre that he went on a botanising excursion with Mill to the Vallée de la Nesque. Mill also made a trip with Helen and Mme Escoffier to the Bouches du Rhône in late October.[9]

By now, Mill and Fabre were firm friends. Fabre frequently called at the Hermitage; for the French schoolmaster and field-researcher and the celebrated English philosopher—the "Virgil of the insect world" and "the Saint of rationalism"—were preparing their *Flora of Vaucluse*, toward which Fabre was writing the section on mushrooms. (Some of the handsome watercolours of mushrooms painted by him can be seen today in the Museum consecrated to his memory at L'Harmas in Sérignan—the lovely property, with its walled garden, that Fabre purchased in 1879 when he had achieved success with his books.) Packe describes the nature of their expeditions together:

> "They trailed across the country of romance . . . Fabre with his short brisk tread in front, Mill following with his long and pensive stride. In a whole day's outing they would hardly speak. Nor was that surprising; for Fabre would spend hours peering through his lens into a strange world peopled by grasshoppers and spiders, and Mill would lose himself in an equally private region of pure cones and tangents. 'As one of these mathematical exercises', he confided to De Morgan, 'it occurred to me to

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[8] J. Veran, in "Le Souvenir de Stuart Mill à Avignon", *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1 September 1937), quotes (p. 215) from a letter by Fabre:

> *"Pour sauver de l'oubli et pour utiliser les collections végétales amassées avec tant d'amour par le fondateur même du Musée, le regretté Requien, qui fut mon maître et mon ami, j'avais conçu le projet de faire le relevé général de la flore du Vaucluse. Ce travail . . . devait ajouter un important chapitre à la géographie botanique de la France. Un homme de bien, dont nous deplorons tous la perte récente, Stuart Mill, concertait ses efforts avec les miens dans cette entreprise."*
>
> "To save from oblivion, and put to use, the botanic collections so lovingly amassed by the Museum's founder, the late lamented Requien, who was both my master and my friend, I conceived the idea of making a full survey of the flora of the Vaucluse. This work came to add an important chapter to the botanic geography of France. A great man, John Stuart Mill, whose recent death we all mourned, concerted his efforts with mine in this task."

[9] I am grateful to M. P. Moulet for this information.

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> ask myself what is the curve of which the equation is $xy=a^2$? I soon came to the conclusion that it is a pair of opposite equilateral hyperbolas referred to as the asymptotes. . . .'"[10]

High-minded as ever, one feels like adding, but Mill's own writing on his botanical expeditions shows that, despite algebraic conundrums, he was deeply responsive to the beauties of natural landscape.

Parliamentary duties engaged Mill's attention in 1866. In July he was active in calming a massive workers' demonstration in Hyde Park, following the defeat of Gladstone's Reform Bill. These were the years of the controversy over Governor Eyre of Jamaica (who had savagely suppressed an uprising), the issue of Irish land reform, such matters as the Married Woman's Property Act, and the National Education Act, as well as the time of the American Civil War. All these occupied Mill; by then he was not only a national figure and *eminence grise* in the administration, but also a kind of "international oracle" (the phrase is used by Packe), receiving mail from all corners of the globe for his advice. All the same, the sample contains specimen plants gathered by the new MP at Bardfield in Essex and on Mont Ventoux in September, and for October there are specimens from Carpentras and the Ile de Barthelasse, the island in the Rhône to the north of Avignon.

THERE IS only one plant from France for 1867, but Fabre refers to an excursion with Mill for this year "*Dans un vallon boisé du Luberon du côté de Bonnieux, avril 1867, Stuart Mill.*" In February that year Mill delivered the Rectoral oration at the University of St Andrews in Scotland.

In 1868 Mill was defeated in a new General Election. Back in Avignon, Helen, his secretary and companion, had a bathroom and covered passage built at the house in Saint-Véran, as well as a special plant-room for Mill's considerable collections. For this year, the sample contains plants from Mont Ventoux and Malham Cove.

In 1869 we can follow Mill on the Plateau St Armand, at Gadagne, and at Orange in May. In June he noted orchids in L'Ile-sur-la-Sorgue. There are specimens from Carpentras and Morières: *Brachypodium distachyon*, false brome grass, is represented ("Carpentras in the wood by the *ferme-école*") and *Orchis incarnata* ("Island of the Sorgue at a mill near Gadagne"). In December Mill excused himself from meeting the Princess Royal of Prussia and Queen Victoria's daughter Alice, who were passing through Avignon.

There are six plants in the sample for 1870. From London, in July, Helen had to travel to Avignon by way of Switzerland to avoid the chaos and disruption caused by the Franco-Prussian war in the north of France.

It was in this year, too, that his friend Fabre resigned from his schoolmaster's post in Avignon. Following liberal educational reforms by the French government, free extra-mural and adult classes had been introduced in the country, much to the chagrin of the Church authorities. Indeed, the Minister of Education, Duruy, who had become a personal friend of Fabre, had caused the entomologist to be nominated for the *Légion d'honneur* in 1868, partly on account of the régime's wish to encourage, or be seen encouraging, scientific activity. Fabre was presented to Louis Napoléon for the award in Paris.

He was involved in the new education reforms, too, and had begun to give free public lectures in the church of Saint-Martial to an audience whch included bourgeois, workers—and young ladies. His classes seem to have been immensely popular, since Fabre was a born communicator, informal but captivating. But opposition from the Catholic authorities followed. The lectures touched on the topic of sex and reproduction in plant and insect life, and this shocked some people, just as it had caused problems in England, among Victorian scientists as eminent as Sir Richard Owen and Thomas Henry Huxley. Owen, finding ladies present in the audience for one British Association lecture, "modified the reproductive part of the history as delicately as possible".[11]

In Avignon Fabre was denounced from the pulpit; partly, it appears, because of his friendship with Duruy and thus with progressively secularist circles. What was materially far worse for him was that his Catholic landladies saw to it that he was turned out of his house. The gifted and stubborn scientist resigned; this sort of pettiness must have been galling to a man already making his name as a researcher, for whom schoolteaching may well have become irksome and time-consuming. Fabre was not a conformist, any more than the radical Mill; at official ceremonies his black felt hat was conspicuous among the more customary toppers. But in resigning, Fabre put himself and his family in dire financial straits. He wrote to Mill, who immediately provided the sum of 3,000 francs, without conditions, to enable Fabre to set up on his own at Orange—a splendid example of Mill's generosity. Not only was Fabre a friend of long standing, but he was also engaged in furthering the bounds of knowledge, and was suffering for his work and principles at the hands of the Catholic hierarchy—the "great enemy of modern ideas" (as Mill remarked, in passing, in his first *Phytologist* essay on the "Botany of Spain").

Fabre insisted to his disciple and biographer, Dr Legros, that the part Mill played in restoring his fortunes should never be forgotten or overlooked. As a mark of his gratitude to the English philosopher, and one which I trust Mill would have appreciated, Fabre in his work on Provençal mushrooms named a hitherto undescribed species the *Stuartella*.[12]

IN 1871, THE SAMPLE has one specimen of a Vaucluse plant, a *Delphinium consolida*, Larkspur ("cornfields near Apt"). Helen described in a letter how she and Mill were sometimes caught by storms on Mont Ventoux:

> "Coffee, wine, milk, or the best of whatever the house afforded was always pressed upon us. Blazing fires lit, in spite of our protests, on bare mountainsides where wood is scarce; and guides offered for miles if we would accept

[10] M. St J. Packe, *The Life of John Stuart Mill*, p. 487, taken from a letter from Mill to Augustus De Morgan, in the Yale collection.

[11] Lynn Barber, *The Heyday of Natural History*, p. 133.

[12] L. Gerin, "L'Amitié entre Henri Fabre et Stuart Mill. . .", p. 3.

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> them. . . . Having wandered about for years on foot among the mountains of Provence, and knowing every valley and peak of the department of Vaucluse better than the streets of London . . . I may be permitted to testify to the kindly character of the Provençaux. . . ."[13]

Mill must have known the landscape of the region in the sort of detail that Wordsworth knew the Lake District.

1872 was another busy year, with specimens from Vaison, Lourmarin, Piolenc, and Orange: *Roemaria hybrida*, the violet-horned poppy, ("Cultivated field near Lourmarin", May), and *Biforia radians* ("Cultivated field near Orange and Caderousse"). There are plants gathered in the Carinthian Alps and, for September, others from Gardagne and the sandy banks of the Rhône.

Early in the next year, Mill was in England, sitting for a portrait by Watts. In April he wrote to Fabre anticipating a reunion in Orange. On the 3rd of May, he made his last botanising trip, having caught the train to Orange from Avignon. Mill lunched with Fabre before catching his return train. The projected Mill-Fabre *Flora* was progressing apace but, alas, the only part ever to be completed was Fabre's section on mushrooms. Within the next week, Mill contracted erysipelas fever and died. Fabre was to have met him at Saint Véran a few days later; he duly arrived in Avignon, only to discover that his friend had already been buried.

MILL'S BOTANICAL ARTICLES for *The Phytologist* merit more than the initial passing mention I have thus far accorded them. The magazine, a highly respectable natural history periodical which ran for 25 years, was contributed to by knowledgeable amateurs. Its tone tends to the sober and the scholarly: titles vary from "Afternoons botanising on Norman's Law, Fifeshire" to "Three days botanising on the Dunes of West Flanders", "The Ferns of Barmouth" (by the Rev.—later Bishop— W. W. How, the hymnodist), and "Rambles by the Ribble". Attention is paid to "Herbaria Sales", and there are regular series of botanical notes, notices, and queries. Mill's name appears as a corresponding contributor.

His botanical essays are sober enough records, yet they contain evidence of a strong appreciation of, and even joy in, the beauty of flowers and the landscapes around them. In places the style becomes as elevated, perhaps, as Mill ever allowed himself to be. We may compare it with the logical, argumentative, and factual norm of exposition in the essays on Liberty or on Representative Government, or the *Autobiography*, that high-minded and factual account of the life of his mind (Basil Willey speaks of a "certain spinsterish dryness of thought and style").

In the *Autobiography*, of course, we are moved by Mill's record of his breakdown in 1823 when he admits, with a candour and matter-of-factness which make the confession all the more striking, that the realisation of all his schemes for reform would not have made him personally one jot happier. The crisis led him to the romantic poetry of Wordsworth, and the poet's capacity for combining descriptions of nature with states of feeling:

> "In the first place, these poems addressed themselves powerfully to one of the strongest of my pleasurable susceptibilities, the love of rural objects and natural scenery; to which I had been indebted not only for much of the pleasure of my life, but quite recently for relief from one of my longest relapses into depression. In this power of rural beauty over me, there was a foundation laid for taking pleasure in Wordsworth's poetry; the more so, as his scenery lies mostly among mountains, which, owing to my early Pyrenean excursion, were my ideal of natural beauty."

The "relapse" is surely a reference to the calamity of Harriet's death; and it is significant that the Pyrenees, first discovered with the Samuel Benthams when he was fourteen, are mentioned as the "ideal" scenery.

The first of Mill's botanical essays for *The Phytologist*, "The Spring Flowers of Southern Europe", consists mainly of a comparison of English, or north European, plants with those from Italy, or southern Europe. Near Rome, however, Mill finds England in Italy:

> "Both in scenery and in vegetation this place, more, perhaps, than any other in Italy, combines the peculiar character and features of southern Europe with a large share of those of England. Its elevation is sufficient to command the whole breadth of the Campagna, and a considerable space of sea beyond . . . Beyond Castel are grassy downs, which combine with the forest to produce the likeness of verdant England in the centre of Italy, and the resemblance extends to botany as well as to scenery. The spring Flora of this region is of an almost English character, though the particular species are mostly such as are either rare, or do not grow at all in England. On the downs of Castel Gandolfo are found *Hesperis* (now *Arabis*) *verna*, with its flower resembling Virginia Stock, and one of the most graceful of the Irides, *I. tuberosa*. Along the circuit of the lake, *Lunaria biennis*, the 'Honesty' of our cottage-gardens, exhibits its lilac, cross-like flowers, and its large, flat, almost nummular, pods. Nearer to the town, *Lithospermum purpureo-coeruleum* puts forth its bright metallic-looking blossoms. The woods abound with yellow *Anemone ranunculoides*. . . ."

Mill continues, specifying the richness of the area; then he allows himself what is almost a peroration:

> "The place is now occupied by a convent, under the wall of which I gathered *Ornithogalum nutans*, and from its neighbourhood I enjoyed a panoramic view, surely the most glorious, in its combination of natural beauty and grandeur of historical recollections, to be found anywhere on earth. The eye ranged from Terracina on one side to Veii on the other, and beyond Veii to the hills of Sutrium and Nebete, once covered by the Ciminian forests, then deemed an inpenetrable barrier between the interior of

[13] M. St. J. Packe, *The Life* . . ., p. 485.

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Etruria and Rome. Below my feet, the Alban mountain, with all its forest-covered folds, and in one of them the dark-blue lake of Nemi: that of Albano, I think, was invisible. To the north, in the dim distance, the Eternal City; to the west, the eternal sea; for eastern boundary, the long line of Sabine mountains, from Soracte, past Tibur, and away towards Praeneste. The range then passed behind the Alban group, and became invisible, but reappeared to the south-east as the mountain-crest of Cora and Pometia, enclosing between its horns the Pontine marshes, which lay spread out below as far as the sea-line, extending east and west, from Terracina in the bay of Fondi, the Volscian Anxur, to the angle of the coast where rises suddenly, between the marshes and the sea, the mountain promontory of Circeii, celebrated alike in history and in fable. Within the space visible from this one point the destinies of the human race were decided. It took the Romans nearly five hundred years to vanquish and incorporate the warlike tribes who inhabited that narrow tract, but this being accomplished, two hundred more sufficed them to complete the conquest of the world."

From an imaginative point of view—that of "the culture of the feelings", which Mill in his crisis of 1823 came to realise was so crucial to happiness—this is notably heightened prose, rare as some rare flower Mill might have delighted to discover. Grounded in close perception of fact, this memorable writing was inspired by his love of botany.

IT HAS NOT SO FAR been noted by biographers that Mill visited Spain in the spring of 1860; his *Phytologist* articles describe botanising excursions he made with Helen, in Catalonia, Tarragona, the environs of Madrid, Montserrat, and the Spanish Pyrenees.

In his first article on Spain, Mill mentions the promising look of agriculture and the railways: signs of progress. He also notes the varieties of soil that give rise to a rich mixture of northern and southern European flora. In a characteristic paragraph, Mill writes:

"The greatest ornaments however of these bushy hills were the *Cisti* which form in some places a great part of the whole of the vegetation. Without reckoning Helianthemums, there were four species of *Cistus* proper; bushes covered all over with large and brilliant blossoms; the decumbent *salviaefolius*, with its milk-white cups; the erect *albidus*, with its grey foliage and delicate mallow-coloured flowers, larger than the largest wild Rose; the stiffish, narrow-leaved *monspeliensis*, with flowers rather smaller than *salviaefolius*, flat and wheel-like, instead of cup-shaped; and a rarer species than any of these, *C. Ledon*, which, with *monspeliensis*, by their viscous touch, and rich resinous smell, form a transition to the real European Gum Cisti. . . . The *Cisti*, happily for the Spanish landscape, are, like the *Ericae*, gregarious plants, and, of all *Cisti* I know, none are so gregarious as *C. Ledon*. Near Perpignan, and on the plateau of Morières, near Avignon, it covers acres of ground."

In Tarragona, his findings were richer: he noted *Clematis flammula*, rice, horse-shoe vetch, immortelle and lavender. In the "garden" of Valencia, irrigated territory, Mill came across *Asphodelus ramosus*—a plant he was familiar with in Languedoc, Provence, Rome and Sicily:

"I am afraid, indeed, that the meadows, celebrated by poets, from which Proserpine was carried off while gathering flowers with her attendant maidens, were in truth no other than these Asphodel wastes, which, notwithstanding the beauty of the plant, are by no means so pleasing to the eye or the mind as a real English or mountain meadow."

On occasions Mill was capable of "the common touch"; the irony is welcome. In his third article, he writes of Guadalaxara, whither he has taken the train from Madrid:

"This little town is made imposing by the vast château of the Mendozas, a building which tells of Spain in what are called her great ages, being in reality the ages by which she was ruined."

The mountains and the monastery of Montserrat provided a profusion of flowers and paragraphs of listings; the vernal wood flowers, blue and pink—*Hepatica, Polygala calcarea* and *Viola canina*—impressed him. He finds a *Ramondia pyrenaica*, only to be discovered in Montserrat and a few places in the higher Pyrenees. This article is, in truth, pretty enumerative, although one can see how such listing, in its comparisons with plants found in England and Italy, served a useful botanical aim, especially since these were comparatively early days in the development of the science.

MILL'S FIFTH (and final) article on Spain for *The Phytologist* sees him returning via Andorra to France. Urgel particularly impressed him, with its valley meadows a mass of bloom. He and Helen entered the town after nightfall:

"I shall never forget the moonlight look of its dark streets, its *jalousies* and overhanging balconies. The situation is one of the most glorious in the whole Pyrenees. It lies down in the long valley which we had been a day and a half descending; but the valley does not open to the plain; it is crossed, and, in appearance, closed a little below the town, by a low range, with a striking peaked outline, which regaled our eyes as we saw it before us during the latter half of our day's journey, and appeared more beautiful still when seen from the promenade outside the walls of Urgel, or from the terrace or *loggia* of our very Spanish, but quite habitable inn. All experienced travellers know how much the beauty of a range of mountains, under a glaring sun, is improved by seeing it on its shady side. Of the little narrow plain into which the valley expands immediately round Urgel, I can say nothing botanically, except to repeat that it is a perfect paradise of roses."

Mill climbed the final pass, the Col de Puymaurin, on his way back into France, and concluded:

"At the foot of the ascent to the lofty pass . . . we encoun-

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tered in profusion four of the most interesting plants we had yet seen; the tall *Anemone alpina*, with its great flowers, of the sulphur-coloured variety (which I have found the commonest both in the Alps and the Pyrenees); the mountain Umbellifer (*Meum athamanticum*), a plant rare in the English mountains, common in the Pyrenees and Cevennes; *Orchis sambucina*, with its great spikes of flowers, both purple and yellow; and the delicately beautiful *Tulipa Celsiana*, also a plant of the Cevennes. As we wound our way up the face of the mountain towards the Col, we came among decidedly Alpine plants; the three Gentians which light up the lofty pastures with their dark blue flowers, *G. acaulis* and *verna*, known to all Alpine explorers; *G. pyrenaica*, peculiar to the Eastern Pyrenees; the small white-flowered *Ranunculus pyrenaicus*; the lovely *Hepatica*, *Crocus vernus*, and a pink *Androsace*, common on the Pyrenean summits, long confounded with the *A. carnea* of the Alps, but to be described, as I am told, in the Supplement to the '*Flore de France*', under the name of *A. Lagerii*. One plant, though I did not see it till just on the French side of the pass, I cannot help mentioning, and with this I close my list: that exquisitely fringed and strangely coloured plant, one of the most delicate of Alpine vegetable products, the plant so much admired by Mr. Ruskin, *Soldanella alpina*. From this place a long and gradual descent brought us into the beautiful valley of the Ariège; and being now in a country well-explored, and possessed of excellent Floras, I at last end this long memorandum, and finally take my leave."

While Fabre's sensibility was that of the artist, Mill's appreciation of nature (and his expression of it) was that of a civilised rationalist, though not one lacking in sensitivity to its beauty and value; nature was a balance to his philosophical work and his efforts towards social reform. Nature was Fabre's life and later on, his livelihood. Mill's observations of botany were systematical, after the logical manner he had learnt from George Bentham.

Fabre deprecated systematising and theorising—even the theories of Darwin, for all that he esteemed the great English scientist, and corresponded with him. Musician, watercolourist, poet (in both French and Provençal), and a lover of classical literature, Fabre has been stigmatised as an anti-academic amateur. His attitude to the insect world he so meticulously observed in the field and described so lyrically was one of reverence for the complex mysteries of the lives he brought to light. His style is anecdotal, simple and avuncular, aimed at a wide popular audience. One might say that his mind had been influenced by 19th-century romantic attitudes to nature; whereas Mill's mind belongs to the 18th century. Yet even if Fabre was something of a spiritualist in his attitude, his method was empirical and inductive, which would have earned Mill's admiration.

Both men were non-conformists, idiosyncratic pioneers, out of step with the stuffier, conservative ethos of their age. This must have underlaid their friendship, which would have done much to console Mill in his lonely desolation over the loss of Harriet. Packe suggests that there is a psychological pattern to be discerned, in that Mill was attracted by emotionally vital people, such as John Sterling (the disciple of Carlyle), Carlyle himself—and, of course, Harriet, by all accounts a strong-willed lady. One wonders if Fabre was not a similar personality—the quiet but determined researcher, with his wide range of interests and his full domestic life.

Should we see Mill's botanising as standing between his rationalism and his more "Romantic" inclinations, between the 18th-century side of his make-up and the 19th-century side? His work always seems to point in the direction of an attempt to humanise the rational doctrines of Bentham and Mill senior and so to allow fuller play to man's emotional life, attested by his interest in Carlyle and Wordsworth. Mill's botanical expeditions may well be the living and human evidence of this accommodation—and of the happiness he found in it.

The Captain

Through the tiered streets of the fishermen's cottages
and up to the grander villas in the sun,
some with cream-painted porticoes and porches,
their plots all marked with scallop shells and patterns
of red pebbles, you'll climb and find a house
that stands alone to face the sea. A layered garden
dips to the cliff's brink where a cracked seat perches.
The subsidence makes sitting out unsafe
but looks on rocks where oyster-catchers range in warmth
and splashing spray, and all the air is summery with bees
among the leggy lavender and unstaked pinks.
He likes to potter there, pretending to read the paper
and takes his tea outside on an old scratched tray
to watch those amateurs in boats absurdly active in the bay.
He drinks the sun. His hands are flecked by the rise and slip
of magisterial tides. His asperity is his harbour.

Glenda Bragan

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Richard Poole

Brief Memoirs

Zahir-ud-Din Muhammad Babur speaks

I

A child, ambitious of empire,
I climbed into the saddle.

There were marches and counter-marches,
armies formed and slipped away, men
were blown like grains of dust across
hill-slopes, into valleys, over
broad and narrow rivers and
wherever the wind of fortune swung
its lithe, sardonic arms. . . .

Three times I took the city
of Samarkand, three times
held its riches in my fingers—
but they ran away like water
and I fled its gates,
a shadow beneath the stars. . . .

II

Everything is seen as in a glass
in the stone mirror.
A man who walks its length contracts
and stretches, now his true height,
and now less than a true man.

That mirror is my abstract history.

III

A child, ambitious of empire,
I quickly became a man.

Now I am a man I see
all things live by eating:
the sun licks up the dew,
oceans devour the melting cliffs,
night swallows day's colour,
war has chewed my life away.

IV

Say nothing to me of love:
it is a madness.
How, Baburi,
could I look you in the face?

In the violence of my passion
I would wander, seeing
nothing, head bare, feet unshod, crossing
streets, gardens, orchards, neglecting
friends, neglecting strangers.
My wife was nothing to me.

That strange coincidence of our names
haunts me still.
Waking sometimes at dawn,
when the last stars are fading
into the light and earth hangs
upon the edge of appearance, I am almost persuaded
that I, the Emperor, caressed your body
in a dream: that substance
is the dawn's light mirage,
a trick of seeming, and our love
the dawn's tremulous air. . . .

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V

Shaybani Khan comes before me,
blood upon his tunic,
his eyes lost in distances.
Defeated ten miles from the fort of Merv
he sought to flee, leapt
his horse over a wall, fell,
and smothered beneath those who followed him.
Barbarous.

His head was lopped off, his limbs
dispatched to several kingdoms.
The skin of his head, stripped, stuffed with hay,
went to the Sultan.
His skull, set in gold,
became the king's favourite cup.

Across the face of the dial the sun
crawls, loud mouths close
for ever, great powers come
to nothing: still time carries us on.

VI

I take pleasure in horticulture,
in the contours of gardens, in foliage
that droops above a pool's white glass;
give me the wind among leaves
before the slow speech of lutes,
the nakers are dull
beside the music of water.

I delight most of all
when the shoe flower blooms. What is it to me
if it emits no perfume, if its petals
wither in a single day?
Poignant, exquisite, the scarlet heart.

VII

In my dreams, minarets of skulls
tower to the cloud; set in scarred bone
broken teeth smile, snarl at me. . . .

Sleep holds me in its chains. . . .

VIII

When I fought for Hindustan
the great armies of the pagans melted
one into another, one darkness into another . . .
dust flowed across the plain,
swords clashed in sudden light—
lost, rekindled, lost again . . .
the sun, like a mirror's back,
was black and void of light,
but about my soldiers' heads
fluttered angels like butterflies,
transparent, multicoloured, and
the ranks of the enemy squandered themselves,
bursting like bubbles upon wine, coming
to nothing. . . .

Babur did not triumph here, but God.

IX

The brown Hindi swarm like bees.
Their towns and lands lack difference.
Their gardens fail for lack of walls.
But for rivers no water runs.
Their cities
rise and topple, leaving
barely a human trace. A million lives
fold under a cold pleat of time.

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X

How clearly I remember Andejan,
my lost capital—
might it not be yesterday
I was a child, and a king?

I will name its three gates,
the nine canals that feed its mills,
its great fortress of stone
that has no equal I have seen.

I will name its fruit and grain,
its fine grapes, fat melons,
and its pheasants, so plump
that four persons may sit down to the broth
of one, and be overfaced.

XI

Humayun, how could I live
with you no longer in the world?
Nothing in my treasury
is dearer to me than you:
the fatuity of rubies!

As I walked about your bed
I sensed that God heard my voice.

A miraculous recovery, they say,
but it is simple:
God approved my equation.

You live, and I die.

XII

My sight fails, or reality
is not the thing it was: or perhaps
it was always thus, and not what I thought—that explosion
of action at whose heart it seemed I stood. . . .

Light swims, and all objects
surrender their perimeters, dissolving
one into another, becoming one. . . .
Is this the singleness my life
appeared to lack? Yet I lived it,
would not have lived it other than I did,
or could not. . . .

Strangeness flows about me, the colours of a garden filled
with undiscovered flowers. . . .
If this is God's light,
who would not be part of it. . . ?

See, how easily this light contains darkness. . . .

ZAHIR-UD-DIN MUHAMMAD BABUR *was born on the 6th Muharrem 888 (in Western chronology, 14 February 1483). A Barlas Turk, he was descended on his mother's side from Timur and on his father's side from Genghis Khan. He ascended the throne of Fergana, a small principality to the north of the Hindu Kush, in his twelfth year—about two years before the discovery of America by Columbus. He spent much of his life trying to recover Timur's old capital of Samarkand, but though he took the city no less than three times, he was never able to hold it for longer than eight months. This was chiefly due to the opposition of the Uzbeks, led by Shaybani Khan. Most of his early life, then, was spent in armed struggle, or as a fugitive and wanderer.*

He was a man of great physical strength and martial skill. In 925 he cut down, in single combat, five Mughal champions in quick succession. Yet he was also a man of culture and a considerable poet: his Memoirs, fragmentary though they are, interlard accounts of his almost continuous campaignings with long descriptions of places and peoples, flora and fauna—all characterised by an unquenchable personal interest. He was witty and convivial; and, until he abjured it during his triumphant invasion of Hindustan, a great lover of wine.

Unable to win back his paternal inheritance, he turned to foreign conquest to secure his fortunes. A series of raids into the Punjab was followed in 932 by a major incursion, during which Babur's army of 12,000 (consisting of seasoned cavalrymen backed by artillery) defeated Sultan Ibrahim Lodi's force of 100,000 men and 100 elephants at Panipat. Virtually surrounded, Babur rallied his men, who wished to return home, and inflicted a severe defeat on the armies ranged against him. Further victories over the Afghans and other Rajput chiefs meant that Babur's dominions stretched from Qandahar to the borders of Bengal, their southern boundaries marked by the Rajput desert and the fortresses of Ranthambhor, Gwalior and Chanderi.

A supplement to his Memoirs recounts that when his son Humayun fell seriously ill, Babur walked three times about his bed, devoting his life to Heaven in exchange for his son's. Immediately, Humayun recovered and Babur began to fail. But his selflessness did not prevent the emergence of dynastic struggles over his still incompletely pacified and unorganised empire—struggles which began even as he lay dying.

He died on the 6th of the first Jumada, 937 (26 December 1530), at Agra.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Paris Notebook

From Rags to Riches?—By JEAN-FRANÇOIS REVEL

DOES INFORMATION exist in order not to be used? The question certainly arises in connection with the Third World, underdevelopment, and relations between the rich and poor countries—for this is one of the most fertile areas for sheer falsification of facts, lying propaganda, and the spawning of myths. The origins and causes of what in France we call *l'idéologie tiers-mondiste* would be worth examining in depth. Its misleading effects have been the object of serious study for years. A new book, however, by the outstanding French economist and demographer Jean-Claude Chesnais, goes further than the critique of "Third Worldism" that has been evolving since the mid-1970s.[1] Chesnais does not confine himself to demonstrating that the standard explanation of the poverty of the Third World is false; he proves that the poverty is itself false. The Third World is now "taking off" economically, and it is well on the way to development.

Contrary to the familiar, repeated references to the supposedly ever-increasing "gap" between the rich world and the poor world, the place occupied by the developing world in the global economy, measured by its share of income, actually grew between 1950 and 1985. Its standard of living doubled during the same period, which represents an average growth-rate of 2% per annum—the very same rate that Europe experienced during its economic rise in the last century.

The "gap" argument is in fact fallacious: if my income rises from 1 franc to 2 francs and my neighbour's from 4 francs to 6 francs, the gap between us may have widened but my standard-of-living has doubled, which from my point of view represents an appreciable increase. Moreover, the economies of the Third World are diversifying. They are going beyond the stage of exporting raw materials and are taking an increasing part in world production of manufactured goods—and a corresponding share of the relevant markets. In India, Indonesia, and Pakistan, more than a third of the national product now comes from industry.

The prevailing wisdom, which continues to be ground out daily in every quarter, is that the situation in the agricultural and food sectors has worsened and is deteriorating all the time. Yet we have the figures: from 1950 to 1985, food production per capita (that is to say, over and above population increases) went up by 30% in the developing countries. Top of the league was Asia, followed by Latin America (which started from a very much lower level). The big loser was Africa.

In fact, it is the (very recent) tragedy of Africa that has largely concealed the extent to which the developing world has been catching up with the developed world. *Le Point* devoted a whole issue (No. 738, 10 November 1986) to that tragedy, pointing out that it had a lot more to do with human error than with natural disasters or the legendary inequality of "the terms of exchange". Most African leaders have followed the opposite policies to those of their Asian counterparts. They can and must correct their mistakes—without attributing the resultant damage to "scapegoats", as we heard the Madagascan President, Didier Ratsiraka, seeking to do on the occasion of his recent visit to Paris, when he showed evidence of a rare talent for obfuscation. Latin American indebtedness, shrewdly exploited by the élites responsible for squandering and embezzling the sums lent, likewise masks the general progress being made by Third World countries—notably the tremendous "leap forward" achieved over the last 30 years by the two giants with the largest debt burdens: Brazil and Mexico.

THE INFLUX of Western capital is no guarantee that it will be put to good use. That is shown by the way in which the economies of many oil-producing countries have failed to take off, despite the "golden decade" for oil producers in 1973-83. The developing countries that achieved the highest growth rates —and the greatest improvements in individual standards of living during those years—do not figure on the list of oil-producing countries.

Another fallacious notion, derived from Malthus and taken up notably by "the Club of Rome", is that demographic pressure is both a symptom and a cause of poverty. In fact, as the demographic history of the human race prior to the 18th

[1] *La revanche du tiers monde.* BY JEAN-CLAUDE CHESNAIS. Robert Laffont.

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century clearly shows, poverty causes population levels to stagnate. That was the rule for thousands of years. For population levels to rise, it is first necessary for infant mortality to fall and life expectancy to increase. It is hard to see how these two phenomena can occur without a prior improvement in nutritional and sanitary conditions. The demographic explosion is thus initially a consequence of progress, which multiplication of the active population further accelerates (as Keynes clearly saw). It is only when a higher level of well-being has been achieved that demographic stagnation, coupled with a long life expectancy, spontaneously sets in.

This is typical of prosperous countries and its cause is no longer an insufficiency of resources and hygiene but deliberate control of the birth rate. Several so-called Third World countries are now beginning to enter this phase, as the countries of southern Europe did some 30 years ago.

And what, indeed, is the future of Europe in this great move forward? That is something that requires urgent reconsideration in the light of the fresh analysis and ideas presented by Chesnais in a specialist work that is that rare thing: a book that can be read, and even devoured, without difficulty by the general public. I hesitate to say "it reads like a novel" (as the cliché goes) because the novel, in this context, is the pious Third Worldist story, and that is unreadable. Rather, it reads like a fascinating history book that illuminates the past, shedding light on the future.

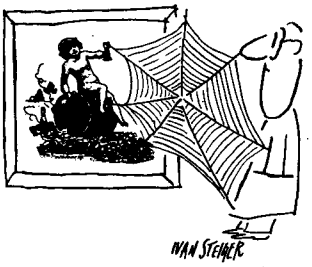
Europe, for its part, would do well to realise as soon as possible that tomorrow's competition will come not just from its current commercial *bêtes noires*—North America and Japan—but from India, Indonesia, and Brazil. Nearer home—indeed, soon to be in our midst—the most buoyant economy is going to be that of Turkey. And let's not forget that a substantial third of the underdeveloped countries belong to the Communist world: China, Viet Nam, North Korea, Cuba, Ethiopia, Nicaragua. . . . That is the real *tiers monde*, on every continent.

The future will depend very largely on whether or not the Communist states take the reforming course, whether or not they opt for a real, in-depth *libéralisation* of their economies. If they do, their growth rate between now and the year 2025 will be more than twice that which continued fidelity to Communism would provide. Projected calculations suggest that, say, a capitalist China would equal—in terms of competitive dynamism *vis-à-vis* ourselves—10 Japans, 25 South Koreas, and 55 Taiwans![2]

A great deal has been talked and written about "global economic competition". Well, this is what it is actually going to look like. The challenge that Jean-Claude Chesnais's Third World (*mouvant, bientôt fondant*, soon to be on the rampage) poses to European political unity of decision-making and mobilisation would seem to be as urgent as that posed by Soviet strategy. Meeting both challenges imposes one fundamental condition that has to do more with mind than with matter: it is knowing the facts, and what they are all about.

[2] On Taiwan and its miracle, see Ricardo Paseyro's excellent, up-to-the-minute account, *Taiwan, clé du Pacifique* (Presses Universitaires de France). See also "The Strange Case of Taiwan" by Paul Hollander, in ENCOUNTER (July-August 1987).

The Collector Created Museums



THE ORDINARY VISITOR entering any museum, whether large or small, in the Old World or the New . . . the researcher filling in his card to consult a book in a library . . . the passer-by who pauses for a moment in front of the window of an antique dealer or a curio shop to gaze at a glittering, multicoloured display of rare minerals or crystals or shells . . . should all three, and many others like them, spare a thought for the long-dead character who, one day long ago, took the decision to assemble together objects that caught his fancy: namely, the collector.

For it was he who, once upon a time, whether through love of the old or a passion for the *avant-garde*, whether moved by flair or vanity—be he scholarly pauper, affluent lord, eccentric bourgeois, king, or even pope—took the trouble and spent the money to provide for our pleasure and that of our as yet unborn descendants.

Behind every public collection, there is a private collection, even if it be—as is by no means always the case—that of a prince. Collectors are the key figures in the art world, and it is this *phénomène anthropologique* that is studied in a new book by Krzysztof Pomian,[1] combining accurate information with sound interpretation in a way that makes us relive (and, above all, rethink) the history of intellectual and aesthetic creation. That history is preserved in time in its tangible products. The collector is a little like the runner in a relay-race who passes the baton to the person in front of him. (In French we even call the baton a *témoin*, a "witness".) When the baton-witness falls—and some are lost every day—a sliver of culture sinks for ever into invisibility, inaccessibility, and nothingness.

Pomian systematically confines his field of observation to Paris and Venice from the 16th to the 18th century. Two cities and three centuries of singular brilliance, certainly, in the firmament of the "*curiosité*" (as it was called) or "curio" for short. But he digresses frequently, both backwards, forwards, and sideways. Two questions are propounded. What constitutes a collection? How and by what avenues does the private collection become the museum?

For a collection to exist, a number of criteria must be met simultaneously. The first of these is undoubtedly the intention of forming a collection. Having paintings in one's house and being a collector of paintings are very different things. People who simply hoard their mothers' and grandmothers' dresses are not collectors of bygone fashions, but the person who buys them in order to put them on show *is*, and he metamorphoses the cast-offs into a form of art. Not

[1] *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux*. By KRZYSZTOF POMIAN. Gallimard.

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every accumulation of objects or books constitutes a collection. A family, an individual, a religious institution, or a town hall may, over the centuries, accumulate furniture, china, and tapestries for their own use without ever being aware that the pieces concerned are, or will, become valuable and will form the basis of a future collection. In Pomian's view a collection, properly so-called, is

> "any set of natural or artificial objects kept temporarily or permanently outside the circuit of economic activities, subject to special protection in an enclosed space organised for that purpose, and available for inspection. . . ."

In the Christian West, soon to be revolutionised by Humanism, it was towards the end of the 14th century that the collection made its appearance as a cultural fact. One of the earliest expressions of it was the "*cabinet de curiosités*", which might bring together antiquities, animals, plants, shells, minerals, and items of costume. The collector of "curios" was succeeded by the amateur "art-lover", who was interested only in painting and sculpture to the exclusion of unruffled peacock feathers and random samples of volcanic rock. At the top of the hierarchy of art-lovers was *le patron des arts*, who, in Taine's phrase, was the "*personalité représentative*" of the Renaissance and the classical period, the "dilettante" who not only bought and collected but commissioned, instigated, even inspired.

In the 18th century, with the advent of public auctions and the development of the art market, a further figure emerged. This was the "*connaisseur*", who was usually also a dealer. The connoisseur is the man who not only knows what's what but has an eye for distinguishing the genuine from the fake, the original from the copy, *le grand maître* from the lesser imitator. In short, he possesses that indispensable instinct for attribution.

In Italy in the 1950s, much amusement was occasioned by the discomfiture of a noble lord who had paid a large sum of money for a Titian. Italian law prohibiting the export of any painting more than a few years old, the seller suggested to the aristocrat that, to dupe the Customs and Excise, they have his masterpiece lightly covered with a daub by an inferior artist currently in vogue.

"Afterwards", he said, "I'll send over to London a skilful restorer who will make short work of removing the surface paint, and you'll soon be able to hang the Titian on your wall."

When the time came, the restorer skilfully removed the daub, and the Titian did indeed reappear. However, the restorer rubbed a little too hard in places and, beneath the "Titian", exposed a magnificent portrait of Benito Mussolini!

Guarding against making bad buys became an imperative duty in the museum era, when public funds were involved. The transition from private collection to public library and museum began in the early 17th century. The first of the great European public libraries was the Bodleian, which opened in Oxford in 1602. In 1675 in the same city, Elias Ashmole bequeathed his collections to the university (the present Ashmolean Museum). In France, it became the established custom during the 18th century to allow the public to view *les collections royales* on certain days. Most of our French museums, starting with the greatest of them all, have this monarchical, statist tradition behind them. In this season of royalist restlessness, remember that the sole legitimate successor of both the Valois and the Bourbon houses is the curator-in-chief of the *département des peintures* at the Louvre.

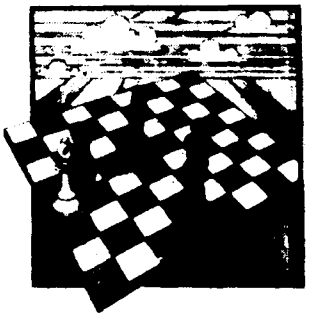
In diametrical opposition to this tradition, museums in Britain, the United States and above all in Italy, came into being by a quite different route. Pomian calls it the "evergetic" route, from the Greek word *evergetes*, a benefactor. An evergetic museum, as he defines it, is "a private collection bequeathed by its creator either to the town of his birth, or to the State, or to some educational or religious institution." Pomian rightly remarks that the greater the degree of individual participation in public affairs, the more individuals show a propensity to place their possessions at the disposal of the community. The evergetic model is characteristic of democracies, or at least of oligarchies, but not of totalitarian or over-centralised states that lack local patriotism.

The fact is that art stays alive primarily because of amateurs and private collectors. I am astonished when I see young painters having their first exhibition in a museum or an arts centre. It is as if a writer were from the outset to work purely to produce university literature (or "creative writing") courses without ever being submitted to a public of spontaneous, natural readers. Neither state subsidies nor "business patronage", welcome and indispensable though both are, can wholly fill the original, high-risk role of the collector, who is himself—as this deeply thoughtful book teaches us—a genuinely creative figure on the cultural scene.

J.-F.R.

Mate, & Checkmate

By Nora Beloff



Even aside from the contradiction in the title, *Child of Change: An Autobiography* by Garry Kasparov with Donald Trelford[1] is a peculiar work. Ostensibly it might seem that if Kasparov cannot write his own autobiography (though the book claims he has literary talents and "at heart I am a poet"), the job should not be entrusted to someone who does not speak his language, knows little about the USSR, and (as

[1] *Child of Change: An Autobiography*. By Garry Kasparov with Donald Trelford. Hutchinson, £12.95.

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the text suggests and Trelford has openly admitted) is no great expert on chess. It might seem even odder, seen from this side, that the Editor of a world-famous newspaper, *The Observer*, should take time off to do a job of ghost-writing—normally left to retired writers with time on their hands, or to cub-reporters waiting to get into real newspaper work.

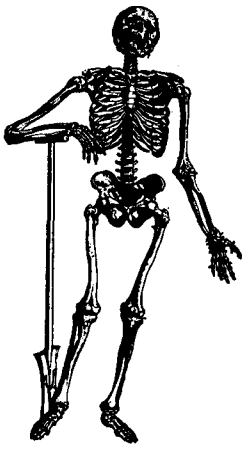
To express surprise, however, is to betray insufficient respect for the unparalleled Soviet propaganda machine, which proves itself capable, yet again, of presenting the image of a "brave new world", straddled by "a new breed of Russians" —in this case Garry (*né* Weinstein) Kasparov. Trelford is a professional journalist who will deliver his copy on time, but in supposing that he may be serving the cause of international understanding by interspersing a dramatic sports story with repeated references to the glories of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, appears to be insufficiently expert on Soviet methods of manipulation. Kasparov's rise to become the chess world's Superman is linked to the proposition that the triumph is part of Gorbachov's breakthrough from the "stultifying orthodoxies" of the Brezhnev/Karpov era to the "dynamic, creative, bold and honest" régime personified by the present Party Secretary . . . and by Kasparov.

In the introduction, telling us why the book was written, Kasparov/Trelford says:

> "I am helping the ideals of openness and democracy that [Gorbachov] has ordained for us all. . . . I hope the book also illuminates the struggle of rival values taking place in our society . . . a movement away from totalitarianism towards democracy."

Plague & Property

London



MORE THAN *six centuries of London's history are being exposed in a dig which will last until early 1988, and which will eventually incorporate remains of the medieval monastery into the new buildings on the site.*

Excavations on the site of the former Royal Mint have shown that before the area was used for coining money it had been an abbey, a plague cemetery, and a Navy depot.

The Royal Mint was housed just north of the Tower of London until a few years ago.

ONE PERIOD **of use about which the archaeologists from the Museum of London are being temporarily reticent is the Black Death cemetery used to bury the dead from that great plague of 1349. The Cistercian Abbey (founder: Edward III, 1350) lay just outside the walls of the City. As the intramural churchyards became full, the monastic burial ground was used.**

"We don't think the developers want the new building to be known as 'Black Death House'," one of the archaeologists said.

Norman Hammond
in THE TIMES (*London*)

David and Goliath figure prominently, Kasparov unabashedly identifying himself with David: not just a better player but a better man:

> "As in many areas of Soviet life, chess had to be opened up to honest examination and new ideas. This is the battle I have been fighting for many years. I am winning the battle."

In the years 1985 and 1986, while Kasparov was making his way to the top, we are told that the new generation felt ready for a change: "We looked to Gorbachov to fly the flag of reform. We were not disappointed; he had already revolutionised agriculture." (That will be news for the folks down on the farm.)

TO THOSE familiar with the deeply ingrained anti-Semitism built into the Soviet system since Stalin's time, Trelford's innocence is exposed when he puts into English the official Soviet explanation of how it was that Garry Weinstein, at the age of ten, identified (among others by a *Guardian* chess correspondent) as "a future world champion", promptly had to have his name changed to "Kasparov". Manifestly, Moscow had discovered a new genius on their books, and made the appropriate arrangements. The book, however, would have us believe that the hero's Armenian maternal family (presumably already Russified, perhaps from Kasparian?), unlike the Weinsteins, had no male heir, so "it seemed natural"—anyway to Trelford, but perhaps not to a schoolboy called on to get used to a new name—that he should become Kasparov, a true Russian.

His "Russianness", in preference to his Armenian-Jewish identity, is repeatedly stressed:

> "I am a Russian by culture and education and I always read Russian books and studied Russian writers at school."

Indeed on the night of his ultimate glory his Jewishness fades away. He and his team had been installed in a palatial house to which, after winning the world title, he returned, "spending 15 minutes going from room to room just screaming and yelling out of pure, animal joy. . . ." Later that night, however, an old friend finds him "deep in a thick book". It is identified only by its thickness, but the subject was "the origins of the Christian world".

THE RUSSIANS CERTAINLY take their chess seriously. Watching their concentration in Moscow parks, I had been inclined to accept the views of my Moscow friends that one of the reasons for the game's popularity is that it is a pastime which Soviet citizens can enjoy without having to toe the Party line. At the higher level, the book reveals that, in chess too, politics is everything. Kasparov gets into the big league thanks to the political chief of his native Azerbaijan, Gaidar Aliev (the book refrains from mentioning his well-known *KGB* origins), "a powerful figure at the Kremlin". Aliev was happy to give Kasparov a friendly

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shove, and Kasparov was safely world champion and this book was published by the time Aliev was in disgrace. Later, after Kasparov had imprudently given a Western magazine the outpourings of his frustrations over the alleged "rigging" of the world championship, his career was saved only thanks to an even more important man, Alexander Yakovlev, a personal friend of Gorbachov. Yakovlev had been elected to the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party in the nick of time.

The excellence of Kasparov's game is beyond dispute: his talents include an elephantine memory, which enables him to hold in his head all the best practical endings of major chess games of the last 25 years. Indeed among the many laudatory comments spattered in the text we have to read the judgment of one fellow grandmaster: "After a highly shaky start, Kasparov has produced what is, almost certainly, the most impressive rearguard action of any sportsman, in any discipline, in the history of recorded sport. . . ."

AT THE AGE of seventeen, he knew he could get to the top, and it is easy to believe that, from then on, ". . . my life was chess and chess was my whole life". I wonder if his subsequent adventures would not have made better sense if the book had accepted Robert Burton's definition of chess: "a choleric game and very offensive to him that loses the mate" (*Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1621). Instead we are told:

> "The image of the chess player corresponds with the ideal Soviet Man, possessor of logic, will and decisiveness, the thinker and man of action rolled into one."

With that calibre of Soviet Man, one is left wondering how Stalin managed to keep the country subservient for so long.

All Soviet biographies retain a Victorian reticence about sex, and this book reveals no more than that that side of Kasparov's life presented certain difficulties. His heart belongs to Mummy: she cherished and fed him through his ordeals, and during the triumphal finale he took to sharing a bedroom with her ". . . in case I awoke during the night and wanted to go on talking. . . ."

The "Autobiography" seems to be primarily a combination of the zeal of the Gorbachov apparatus (Trelford in Moscow was even chauffeured in style to the Central Committee, a privilege rarely accorded to any foreigner) and the authors' eagerness to give the book a nobler significance than mere sport.

Kasparov may not really be anything like as boastful as these pages suggest. Yet some of the reflections can only have come from the master himself—the revelation, for example, of a quite unusual form of personal ambition: "I imagined new generations of little boys shaking hands with Kasparov. It is good for boys to meet such heroes. . . ." Or this account of his social limitations when, as a young man in Baku, he had "great fun meeting a group of ordinary people—a mixed bunch of workers, drivers, and mechanics, simple people from the streets", with whom, he says, "We did harmless but exciting things" (unelaborated). He then, rather class-consciously, comments: "Curiously, I found I could mix with the higher orders of officials and such like and with these lower orders—but not with the people in between."

So much for classless Soviet Man.

Maps

Birds balance on cloud,
reveal invisible
landscapes,
hills of air,
sudden clefts where
sky gives way under wings.

We too
have unseen strata,
hidden rifts,
where words manoeuvre
like birds,
circle holes of unease,
navigate cliffs.

Like medieval cartographers
we learn
to chart territory
in our heads,
afraid
at the edge of conversation,
we fall off the world.

Isobel Thrilling

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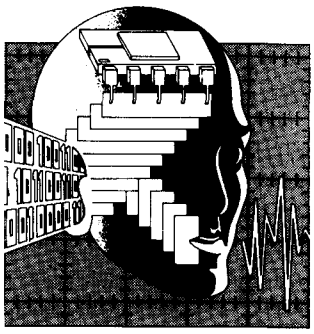
End of a Revolution

The Resurrection of Vladimir Mayakovsky—By ANDREI NAVROZOV



ON THE MORNING OF 14 April 1930, just after ten o'clock, Vladimir Mayakovsky took out the pistol he had used as a prop in the film *Not Born For Money* some twelve years before, and shot himself in the heart. For the funeral, on 17 April, the poet's coffin was decorated with a massive wreath inscribed "*To the iron poet—an iron wreath*". It was a huge flywheel ornamented with hammers, screws, and bolts.

On the day before Mayakovsky's suicide, Lili Brik—the woman he had loved since their first meeting in 1915—left London for Amsterdam in the company of Osip Brik, her husband of nearly twenty years. On 14 April, from Amsterdam, Lili sent Mayakovsky a postcard: *Hollandsche Bloemenvelden*, hyacinths in bloom. The Briks came back to Moscow in time for the funeral.

Boris Pasternak once thought that Mayakovsky was his teacher. Mayakovsky's pupil? Reading Pasternak, who would believe it?[1]

My friend my tender O as in the flight at night from Bergen to the Pole
By the hot down falling off the feet of ember-geese like snow across the land
I swear my tender I swear it is my soul
When I implore forget and sleep my friend.

And yet there they were, the passages in Pasternak's 1931 autobiography, *Safe Conduct*, in which Mayakovsky was remembered. The first time:

"I listened raptly, with all my heart, holding my breath, forgetting myself. I had never heard anything like that before.

It contained everything. . . . And how simple all this was! Art was called tragedy. And that is what it ought to be called. The tragedy was called 'Vladimir Mayakovsky'. The title contained a simple discovery of genius, that a poet is not an author but a lyrical subject, addressing the world in the first person. The title was not the name of the writer but the surname of the work. . . .

It was then that I carried the whole of him away with me and took him into my life."

Later:

"What one could not get used to was not Mayakovsky but the world which he held in his hands and which, capriciously, he took turns setting in motion and bringing to a standstill. . . . In all history there can hardly be such an example of a man so far advanced in a novel experiment—at a time, as he himself had foreseen, when this experiment was so vitally needed, albeit for inconvenient reasons—who could abandon it so completely. . . . But whenever I was asked to say something about myself, I spoke about Mayakovsky. That was no error. I worshipped him. He was the personification of my spiritual horizon."

And at the very end:

"The beginning of April caught Moscow in the white stupor of returning winter. On the seventh it began to thaw again, and on the fourteenth, when Mayakovsky shot himself, not everyone was used to the new spring situation. . . .

His sister was the first to weep for him by her own will and choice, as people weep for greatness, and to her words one was able to weep with infinite breadth, as to the roar of an organ.

She could not stop. . . . 'Remember, remember, Volodya?' she suddenly reminded him, as alive, and began to recite:

I fear in my 'I' I am too alone,
Too desperately afraid to smother.
Hello?
Hello, who is speaking?
Mother?
Mother! Your son is fabulously ill.
Mother! His heart is a burn.
Tell his sisters, Lyuda and Olya,
He's got nowhere to turn."

[1] Here and elsewhere in this essay, the English translations of Russian prose and verse are my own, unless otherwise noted. The verse translations of Pasternak are quoted, in revised form, from my 1978 collection *Transport of Elements* (New Haven, privately printed).

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Later, however, Pasternak would sum up in his 1956 autobiographical postscript, *People and Situations*:

> "As I said, our closeness was exaggerated. . . . I could not understand his propagandist zeal, his imposition of himself and his cronies upon the public by force. . . . We were mistakenly thought to be friends. . . .
>
> Two famous phrases described the time. One was that life got better, life got happier; the other that Mayakovsky was and remained the best and most talented poet of the era. For the second phrase I thanked its author in a personal letter. . . .
>
> Mayakovsky was beginning to be introduced compulsorily, like potatoes under Catherine the Great. That was his second death. He is not to blame for it."

If we pause to consider that the "author" of that clumsy phrase was none other than Joseph Stalin, or that the "inconvenient reasons" to which Pasternak alludes in *Safe Conduct* are his euphemism for the needs of Soviet cultural propaganda, we may conclude that the entanglements of Pasternak and Mayakovsky—in one another and in something beyond them both, something incomprehensibly vast, like the elements—are just too confusing for a simple reader of poetry.

With this in mind, I accepted the situation for what it was, content to think that my interest in Mayakovsky would remain peripheral. Besides, the task of unravelling these and other entanglements of the Russian poet's life for an English-speaking audience seemed as hopeless as the existing translations of his verse.

Then, one day, a Russian friend of mine living in London sent me a copy of a new book he had found interesting; he had not previously heard of the author, who lived in Russia. The book had been published in West Germany by an émigré publisher and became the subject of lively discussion in the pages of the Russian émigré press. This is not surprising: *The Resurrection of Vladimir Mayakovsky* by Yuri Karabchievsky is one of the most remarkable works of literary criticism this century has produced.[2]

As it happened, a few minutes of browsing in Collet's resolved the problem of translation. Relief came from an unexpected quarter: Raduga, the Soviet publishing house, was offering a new edition of Mayakovsky. I opened a volume to the poem "Cloud in Pants" (1915), expecting to see the familiar Soviet equivalent of the British and American drivel that so often passes for verse translation from the Russian. Whoever this Soviet darling named Dorian Rottenberg was, I thought, how could he possibly hope to recreate Mayakovsky's voice?

> *And when my voice*
> *goes obscenely booming*
> *its daily and nightly*
> *rigmarole,*
> *maybe Jesus Christ himself smells the blooming*
> *forget-me-nots of my soul.*

Unbelievably, he had done it.[3]

THE "SILVER AGE" of Russian literature may be said to have begun in 1904 with the publication of Aleksandr Blok's first collection of verse. It reached its apogee in 1912 with the publication of Blok's *Collected Poems*, the three volumes which my grandmother kept in a drawer of her dressing-table, beneath family photographs, Josef Hofmann concert programmes, and opera gloves. It was in 1912 that Pasternak's first poems appeared. *My Sister—Life* was written in the summer of 1917, the first and last summer of a fully democratic Russia. But the era did not end that autumn.

In February 1922, for instance, in Moscow alone there were 143 registered private publishing houses and 35 registered periodicals, most of them privately owned.[4] In "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow in Russian Poetry", published in 1922, Valery Bryusov listed a few of the "currents", or literary groupings, active at the time: Neo-classicists, Realists and Neo-realists, Neo-romantics, Symbolists, Acmeists and Neo-acmeists, Futurists and Neo-futurists, Centrifugals, Imagists, Expressionists, Presentists, Accidentists, Non-subjectivists, Nothings, Eclectics, and finally, Poets Without a School. In other sources for that year one finds references to less prominent "currents", including Luminists, Melodists, Clarists, Biocosmists, and the like.

The new totalitarian régime's control of the press had eliminated the last vestiges of public political dissent as early as 1918. The problems of cultural orthodoxy and its antitheses, intellectual debate and cultural dissent, were wisely perceived as vastly more complicated and difficult to manage. For this reason—and not because the task of establishing a cultural orthodoxy was insufficiently important to warrant immediate action—the régime chose a gradual path, and thus the afterglow of that last summer, the summer of *My Sister—Life*, lingered into the 1930s.

The régime was not idle. In 1922, the Special Commission to Organise Writers into an Autonomous Association was instituted. The name may have sounded innocent, but the intentions behind the move had been made clear.

In the chapter dealing with "the poetry of the Revolution", the authors of the new *History of Russian Soviet Poetry*[5] observe, in passing, that in the earliest period under discus-

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[2] Yuri Karabchievsky, *Voskreseniye Mayakovskogo*, Verlag Strana i Mir (Munich, 1985). It is reported that the author has now renounced Soviet citizenship, and is attempting to emigrate.

[3] *Vladimir Mayakovsky: Selected Works in Three Volumes*. Translated by DORIAN ROTTENBERG. Raduga Publishers (Moscow), £5.95 per volume.

On closer inspection it becomes clear that, perhaps because of the inhuman burden of translating virtually the whole of Volume I (*Selected Verse*) and all of Volume II (*Longer Poems*), a total of nearly 500 pages of rhyming verse, many of Rottenberg's translations are of inferior quality. Nevertheless, he is obviously a born translator of Mayakovsky, and his versions of a dozen or so poems, dispersed throughout the two volumes, have no equals.

[4] See *Pechat' i revolyutsiya* (*Press and the Revolution*), No. 1 (1922).

[5] *Istoriya russkoi sovetskoi poezii 1917-1941* (Leningrad, 1983). The book is the first of its kind in that it is a systematic study of a literary period rich in "unmentionable" names. It was produced in a token printing of 20,000—only 5,000 more than the 1973 Soviet edition of Osip Mandelstam, for instance.

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sion, "the dominant preoccupation of poets was with the colourful figures of the legendary popular leaders Stepan Razin and Yemelyan Pugachev, which attracted the attention of a wide circle of writers . . . including those who had accepted the Revolution and those who had rejected it".

This is true. Quite apart from such well-known examples as Velemir Khlebnikov's "Razin" (1920) and "Razin's Ship" (1922), Sergei Yesenin's "Pugachev" (1921), Marina Tsvetayeva's "Stepan Razin" (1917), and Maximilian Voloshin's "Stenka's Judgment" (1917), the first five or so years of Soviet totalitarian rule seem to have produced an astronomical number of poems, plays, and novels about the two bandits, Stepan (or, tenderly, Stenka) Razin and Yemelyan (or Yemelya) Pugachev, the Terrifier—the anarchistic chieftains of massive popular uprisings in the reigns of Czar Alexis and Catherine the Great, respectively.[6]

The Russian free-thinker's adulation of peasant anarchists like the Terrifier has a good pedigree, going back at least to Pushkin's novella *The Captain's Daughter* (1836)—although, to be fair, the poet had also written a factual *History of the Pugachev Rebellion* (1834) in which the hero is exhaustively portrayed as cruel and cowardly. If Pushkin's non-fictional portrait was meant to please the powers-that-be who would later tolerate his novella (although varied historical evidence, and not only Catherine's letters to Voltaire, suggests that Pugachev exhibited these characteristics), the same could be said of his cultural descendants after 1917, except that few among them bothered to recall the truth about the "colourful figure" in question.

Still, as with any creative impulse in a relatively free cultural environment, the sudden desire on the part of the "wide circle of poets" to eulogise Pugachev and Razin cannot be dismissed out of hand as a desperate attempt to flatter the régime. If anything, it can be seen as a compromise solution. It was assumed that the régime would find the sweeping allegory of a popular revolution flattering, especially because, as everyone still remembered, the Party that had just seized the country by force had had such a shamefully meagre popular following. On the other hand, the theme—broadly defined to embrace a whole eschatology of universal rebellion—was a treasure trove of material and ideas, all of which could be used independently of the ostensible historical subject that lent these interpretations a measure of political relevance. In particular, the poets and writers belonging (or gravitating) to groups identified with the two most powerful literary movements officially encouraged since 1917—"proletarian writers" and "peasant writers"—could telescope aspects of the theme in accordance with their inclinations, at times even producing a semblance of hammer-and-sickle harmony.

Broadly defined by some of the "peasant" poets, the theme was Russia as fire and earth, Russia as decimation and growth. *Red Clamour*, an important collection published in 1918, contained poems by four of the movement's leaders: Sergei Yesenin, Nikolai Klyuev, Petr Oreshin, and Aleksandr Shiryaevets. Klyuev had already published his "Red Song", and Oreshin was soon ready with "Red Russia":[7]

Dear mother Russia,
Try to look more gay.
To amuse the people,
Set yourself ablaze!

As was the usual case with such groups, of the four leaders only Yesenin and Klyuev were genuine—as poets, that is, for despite much play-acting, common at the time, there was not much that was peasant about any of them. Klyuev, in particular, must be recognised as one of the most interesting and important events in the history of Russian literature, "the blossom of buckwheat genius" of his own prophecy.

By the end of the decade that witnessed the end of democracy in Russia, the poets' richly individualised interpretations of the theme were blending into a chorus in the sounds of which one could discern a common fate. The universe was burning around them, and they decided to make the best of it and enjoy the fire. The régime, however, saw things in an altogether different light.

In 1929, on the eve of political events of a magnitude which the poets of earlier decades could not have foreseen in their most apocalyptic moods, A. K. Voronsky, one of the régime's official literary critics, judged the entire generation of poets from Blok to Klyuev:

> "For all of them, the Revolution was valuable in its elemental, rebellious interpretation; none of them could either understand or accept the dictatorship of the proletariat, its reason and discipline. . . . Socialism was alien to these individualists."[8]

As early as 1918, several of the "peasant" poets approached the *Proletcult* organisation with the request to establish a "peasant section" which they could join. The pressure on poets like Klyuev was largely economic: private publishing was not illegal, but increasingly unprofitable, while state publishing, by definition, had an unlimited budget. In keeping with the gradual cultural policy of the early Soviet years, the request was not rejected but "tabled indefinitely".

In 1919, three years before the Special Commission to Organise Writers into an Autonomous Association was formed to begin the formal process of establishing a cultural orthodoxy, another official literary critic reviewed a poem of Klyuev's in which the poet had bent the ubiquitous "com-

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[6] Among the less-known examples one finds Petr Oreshin's "Stepan Razin" (1917) and "Yemelyan the Bandit" (1917), Aleksandr Shiryaevets's "Stepan Razin" (1921), Vasily Kamensky's "Stenka Razin, Heart of the People" (1918), and numerous others.

[7] Nearly everything is "red", for one reason or another, in the poetry of the period. As Marina Tsvetayeva wrote in 1921:

One was white—became red:
Blood has stained him.
One was red—became white:
Death has made him.

By contrast, the *History of Russian Soviet Poetry* sidesteps the issue: "images of light, sun, dawn, and of the colour red in general were used, as a rule, in their abstractly symbolic meaning."

[8] A. K. Voronsky, *Literaturnye portrety* (*Literary Portraits*) (Moscow, 1929).

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promise theme" especially far in favour of the régime.[9] "God save freedom", he quoted Klyuev's shameless lines, "Red monarch of the commune."

> "What archaic flattery! The prophet cannot even guess that the word 'monarch', even qualified with the adjective 'red', is currently out of fashion."

The following year, in 1920, the first instalment of a bizarre novel by Aleksei Chayanov entitled *The Journey of Brother Aleksei to the Land of Peasant Utopia* was published by a state publishing house. So severe was the official reprimand that the author—who "saw the future" in which popular sporting events would be held in vast arenas decorated with statues of Plato and Pythagoras, to the sounds of Scriabin's *Prometheus*—vanished without a trace, along with the concluding chapters of his flattering epic.

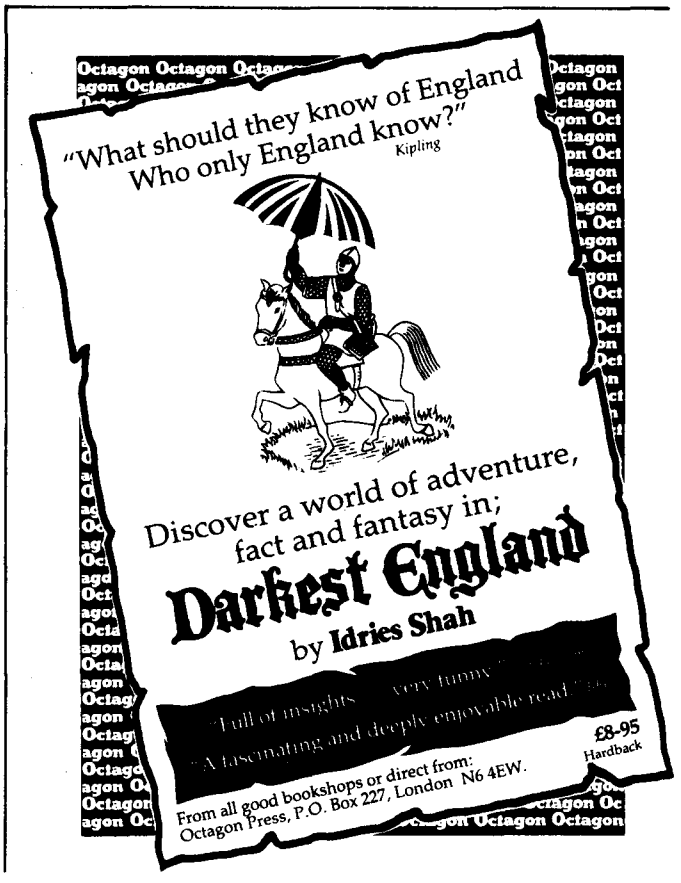
At the end of 1921, Klyuev brought out a collection entitled *The Fourth Rome*, inspired by what he had perceived as a betrayal of peasant ideals by his friend Sergei Yesenin. Yesenin spoke of "the art of the future as a universal orchard, where people would sit in peace and wisdom under the branches of one enormous tree". The tree was "socialism", but it was the image that counted; now he was sporting a top hat and courting his future wife, the dancer Isadora Duncan. Not surprisingly, Lev Trotsky, perhaps the most influential of the official critics—politically, if not culturally—came down on Yesenin's side: Klyuev, wrote Trotsky, "was telling Yesenin off like an older peasant berating his younger brother for deciding to marry a city slut".[10]

In the same year, Lenin made the pronouncement that "the only viable material basis for socialism is heavy industry, incidentally capable of reorganising agriculture." These words, spoken by a man whose Tatar-Finnish ancestry was, unbelievably, as significant to many writers as, say, Velemir Khlebnikov's "brigand roots",[11] were the death-knell of the "peasant" movement. The sinister word "kulak" was being given its official meaning and by 1925 Klyuev was described as an "enemy" and a "kulak ideologue" with "Slavophile views of a natively Russian life and a decadent West". The title of an evening of public lectures organised in 1920, in which many well-known authors took part, was "Poetry as a Manufacturing Industry". Was this not an ideal reply to the new Soviet cultural agenda?

THE NEW RULERS OF RUSSIA understood that the future of totalitarianism was military, not civil. Heavy industry was the way of the future because those who controlled war production, along with such quintessentially urban realities as science and technology, communications, and planning, held the future in their grasp. All the peasantry could contribute was conscripts and forage for the future army, and the illusions of its poets about "the red monarch" presiding over an "orchard of socialism" were harmful, bewildering nonsense. The imposition of "proletarian discipline" on the peasantry by means of state terror, launched soon after Voronsky's summary condemnation of the poets' "individualism", bore, in Robert Conquest's phrase, a "harvest of sorrow". Another such harvest was reaped in the literature of the late 1920s and early '30s, as the poets tried to keep up with the régime's escalating demands.

Gone were Pugachev and Razin, the romantic signposts of a naive cultural compromise. Gone was old Russia, in all its individualised interpretations, apocalyptic, elemental, futuristic. Gone were the "currents" enumerated by Bryusov, the atavisms of a culturally free past. Gone, too, were many of the writers and poets: some had managed to emigrate, others had died of hunger or despair, still others were among the first victims of Soviet terror.

What remained was an endless list of titles, the output of the First Five-Year Plan, from which, at the risk of overtaxing the reader, I would like to quote at random: "Death of a Pioneer"; "How a Lightbulb is Made"; "Verse and Coal"; "Energy"; "The Hydrocentral"; "The Five-Year Plan"; "A Tale of Rubber"; "Matchbuild"; "Strikeworkers of Fire"; "Employee of the Herd"; "Stories of a Nitrogen Atom"; "Petroleum Song"; "Song of the Tractor Brigade"; "Social-



[9] Boris Filippov, "Nikolai Klyuev: Materialy dlya biografii" ("Materials for a Biography") in *Nikolai Klyuev: Works*, edited by G. P. Struve and B. A. Filippov (Munich, 1969).

[10] Lev Trotsky, *Literatura i revolyutsiya* (*Literature and the Revolution*) (Moscow, 1924).

[11] Khlebnikov, one of the leaders of poetic futurism, whose father was a noted ornithologist and whose mother was an historian by training, traced his origins to a Mongolian nomadic camp and an ancestor who once "treated Peter the Great, on his way down the Volga, to a goblet of ill-gotten gold". Even a futurist, it seems, needed a brigand past.

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ism"; "Induction into the Kolkhoz"; "The Party Agitator"; "The Road to Socialism"; "The Kulaks".[12]

By 1934, the years of "proletarian discipline" bore their final fruit. All independent publishing was abolished; all writers were compelled to join the Union of Soviet Writers. Its charter stated:

> "Socialist realism, the sole method of Soviet literature and criticism, requires of the artist a truthful, historically concrete depiction of reality in its revolutionary development."[13]

Individual artistic leanings were no longer of any importance: all would now be *Soviet* writers, and it was as much of a mistake to think that the "proletarians" among them would be most favoured by the régime as fifteen years earlier it had been a mistake to assume that Lenin liked to be compared with Razin.

The needs of Soviet propaganda continued to mature. In February 1936, *Pravda* commented on

> ". . . the stupid and harmful babble to the effect that the Russian people, in its past, comprised a mass of lazy good-for-nothings, endless Oblomovs, Asiatic savages, and so on, has been repeatedly and decisively condemned by the Party."

In 1937, the hundredth anniversary of Aleksandr Pushkin's death was celebrated with great fanfare. The titles from the ensuing bacchanal of Pushkiniana, embracing the poet's life and work in their nationalistic, "great Russian" dimensions, are too numerous to be recalled with interest. They were followed by an avalanche of "poetic" interpretations of Russian history that would have been unimaginable twenty years earlier. Not Razin and Pugachev, the popular revolutionaries, but the Russian Czars became the "colourful figures" at the heart of Stalin's cultural orthodoxy, and the new poets responded with works whose very titles—and not only their total creative sterility—would have frightened even their "peasant" predecessors, not to mention the "proletarian" crowd, in the 1920s. These included "Ancient Fortress"; "The Knight Ioann"; "Field Marshal Kutuzov"; "The Sword of Monomakh"; "Song of the Motherland"; "Song of Vigilance"; "The Ice Battle".[14] In 1938, the film *Aleksandr Nevsky* was released.

The theme was Russian nationalism, the totalitarian creed of an omnipotent state subjugating everything useful and destroying everything useless on its path to world conquest. The state was preparing for war in all earnest, and the organ of cultural propaganda, known as the Union of Soviet Writers, purged to perfection, was in working order. In 1939, 172 writers were decorated by the state. These were the titles of some of the poems on record: "Before Battle"; "The Radar"; "The Submarines"; "Artillery Tables"; "The Torpedo"; "Near the Border"; "Border Patrol".[15] I find it impossible to refrain from quoting several typical lines by one Viktor Gusev:

> *I am a Russian man,*
> *A patriot. I love the Russian air,*
> *I love the Russian land.*

It was against that emerging background, in 1935, that Stalin pronounced Vladimir Mayakovsky the best and most talented poet of the era.

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[12] These works are by E. Bagritsky, I. Selvinsky, A. Zharov, F. Gladkov, M. Shaginyan, S. Kirsanov, G. Sannikov, K. Altaisky, B. Likharev, A. Reshetov, N. Dementyev, N. Aseev, V. Lebedev-Kumach, A. Bezymensky, A. Prokofiev, A. Surkov, A. Tvardovsky, and P. Vasilyev, respectively.

[13] *Ustav Soyuza Sovetskikh Pisatelei* (*Charter of the Union of Soviet Writers*) (Moscow, 1935).

[14] By V. Shefner, I. Selvinsky, V. Soloviev, N. Rylenkov, V. Lebedev-Kumach, A. Surkov, and K. Simonov, respectively.

[15] By A. Kovalenkov, M. Troitsky, A. Gitovich, A. Lebedev, A. Kopshtein, V. Glotov, and N. Titov, respectively.

Yuri Karabchievsky begins his study of Mayakovsky on a personal note, a fact of personal biography in the life of every Russian born after 1928. The Soviet citizen cannot escape his compulsory biography, with its preordained course of state education, obligatory employment, and permanent residence; Mayakovsky is but one of its myriad predictable facts of which his daily existence is comprised. He may not read Mayakovsky's verse; but it comes to him, as Karabchievsky puts it, from "the nursery supervisor, the pioneer leader in a youth camp, the teacher at school". It comes from "the actor's voice on the radio, the newspaper headline, the banner in a factory, the poster in a police station. . . . And yet our personal attitude to these sources never contradicts the meaning of his verse." The ugliest newspaper headline may be a quotation from, say, Blok—"Of valour, of courage, of glory"—yet we instinctively understand at once that the Soviet leader-writer is corrupting an immortal line by taking it out of context. Not so with Mayakovsky, observes the author, with his volumes upon volumes of such "headline" material.

For an intellectual born in the Mayakovsky cult, as Karabchievsky was, the temptation to discard him, to dismiss his verse out of hand as so much Soviet propaganda, is nearly insurmountable; and as one who escaped my Soviet destiny, never attended Soviet school or joined any Soviet organisation, I can testify that Karabchievsky approaches his task of evaluating Mayakovsky with superhuman detachment.

"Let us formulate the most objective theory possible", he writes in his introduction.

> "A young, brilliant poet, a man of remarkable talent, an innovator and reformer of poetic technique, a rebel and a romantic, saw first the romanticism of the Revolution, and later its objective necessity, becoming its servant. Gradually he is drawn into its whirlwind, embraces its violence and demagoguery, and becomes the spokesman, not for the Revolution, but for power. Here he begins losing both his energy and his genius, feeling the squeeze of censorship and bureaucracy, discovering the emptiness of the ideals he serves; he is tormented by conscience and guilt, repents everything, and in despair takes his own life. Another victim of the Stalin era. . . ."

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This picture closely resembles the image of Mayakovsky I had in my own mind until I read Karabchievsky's book. In its simplicity—sacrificing historical detail to a comfortably "anti-Soviet", paradoxical view of Mayakovsky as Stalin's victim—I found relief from the nagging complexities of Pasternak's recollections. Indeed, the "objective theory" which Karabchievsky formulates in his introduction—and disproves in his book—is the prevalent view of Mayakovsky in the mind of today's Russian intelligentsia, an intuitive reaction to the official creed by those who still have the will to say "But the early Mayakovsky . . ." instead of a curt "I cannot bear that man's name".

Assessing the genius of the early Mayakovsky, Karabchievsky says calmly: "No, we have not been misled." A totally new poet is there before us, and after more than half a century the originality of his verse has not begun to wane. Perhaps the most conspicuous feature of the verse is its demonic energy, as in the lines the poet addresses to God:

> *You—omnipotent? Deal out death and life?*
> *You are just an ignoramus, a petty brute.*
> *Look—I bend down,*
> *pull a cobbler's knife*
> *from inside the top of my boot.*
> *Let your feathers shiver in St Vitus's dance;*
> *crouch in heaven,*
> *lip-serving,*
> *wing-flapping rascals:*
> *I'll rip you all up, stinking with incense,*
> *from here right down to Alaska!*[16]

Yet this is where, thinks Karabchievsky, our first "impartial" doubts about Mayakovsky occur. We want to become one with the poet, to feel his injury as our own, but we cannot: what holds us back is not so much the monstrous blasphemy of these lines as their diabolical virtuosity. It is this playful perfection (obvious in the Russian original and, I believe, captured by the translator here) that we find incongruous, this declamatory brilliance incompatible with the understatement characteristic of genuine feeling. It reminds us of Paganini, of whom it was said that he made a pact with the devil. No one would have thought of saying this about Chopin, or even Liszt.

ONCE THE GENUINENESS of the poet's feeling is in doubt, almost automatically we begin to search for the cause of his suffering. Karabchievsky is succinct in his identification: ". . . the indifference of the world around him. The world lives a life of its own, it is in no hurry to glorify Mayakovsky, love him, give itself up to him. For that, the world deserves damnation, contempt, hate, and vengeance." Like God, Mayakovsky's woman—as, for instance, Maria in "Cloud in Pants"—is only a scale model of the world, created to demonstrate the principle of giving and of *not* giving:

[16] This and the subsequent quotation are from "Clouds in Pants", translated by Dorian Rottenberg.

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Maria!
One poet sings sonnets to Tiana
While I,
all human,
flesh all the way,
just beg for your body
like Christians for manna:
"Lord, give us
our daily bread
this day!"
. . .
No?
You don't want to?
Ha!

From frustration to scorn, from complaint to vengeance, from pain to violence—so Karabchievsky circumscribes the emotional stasis in Mayakovsky's early verse. He illustrates the poverty of his vengeful imagery by stringing together the relevant epithets from several poems: "bloodied soul, mouth bloody with song, blood-stained heart's tatters", and so on, *ad nauseam*. Compare this with the early Pasternak:

But time would grow old, and deaf, and pass,
And, lightly touching frames with webs of amber,
Dawns from the garden veined the terrace glass
With sanguine tears of September.

Here, perhaps, one could object that the epithet merely describes a colour. Consider another example:

Remember life? Remember slow flakes fly,
Like doves of snow, sped abreast of silence?
The wind would quickly whirl them on the sly,
Then quickly bring them down with great violence.

You changed places!—It placed under us
Carpets of sleds and crystal heirlooms!
For life, like blood, blew venous clouds, thunderous
With gusts of flurries pouring burning blooms!

How far all this is from Mayakovsky's bloody carcasses.

It is in Mayakovsky's passion for vengeance—otherwise known as social justice—that his revolutionary sentiment was engendered, and it is there, of course, that the ubiquitous theme I have discussed found another mouthpiece. Karabchievsky sees in Mayakovsky's interpretation of the theme a blind, pathological hate:

And we—
Not some Corneille and Racine,
Our father
Who tries our patience—
we will dowse him
with kerosene,
and—into the street,
for illumination!

There are words, notes Karabchievsky, which have a limited metaphorical reach, and "father" is one of them. Again, what is forbidding here is not so much the barbarism of the image as its flatness, its lifeless, galvanic oscillation between the metaphoric and the literal. That, in Karabchievsky's view, is the critical key to all of Mayakovsky: his verse exists in a world "limited by the exterior of things, the appearance of objects, the surface of words"—limited, that is, by the literalism of his astonishing, catastrophically powerful imagination. The declarative qualities of his verse are the inevitable product of this literalism.

The world of the young Mayakovsky emerges most clearly from his long poem "Man" (1916-17), divided with Nietzschean confidence into "Mayakovsky's Nativity", his "Life", "Passions", and "Ascension", "Mayakovsky in Heaven", and so on. The world has a set of controls, and the poet finally gets near them:

"Turn this one" they ask,
"Make the whole world extinct:
all they know
is spray fields with blood."
I grin,
"Let them go on spraying,
anyway, the earth is nothing but mud."

The universe has its mysteries:

A bakery.
The baker.
Bakes his rolls.
What is he?
A flour-bespattered zero.
And suddenly
rolls
grow fiddle-necks,
get souls.
He plays them.
He is everyone's love and hero.

But the centre of power is one:

And in the middle,
contoured by an unflappable hem,
on an island—one giant flowery carpet—
lives
the ruler of all of them,
my rival,
my enemy, vicious as a harpy.
The tenderest polka-dots deck his fine stockings.
Delightful,
the stripes on the dandy's pants.
A tie
with all colours of the rainbow—
shocking!—
from his neck
to his globe-belly
hangs
askance.

Inevitably, the theme makes its appearance:

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Pity them?
But when did they pity me*?*
They've gobbled up boulevards,
suburbs,
environs.
Antiquarian!
I want a dagger,
a real one, see?
Time for vengeance
to make an appearance.[17]

IN POETRY, observes Karabchievsky, the internal is not "located" in the external; poetic comprehension of phenomena is not surgical, but therapeutic; the poet does not murder to dissect. The Mayakovsky of "Man", by contrast, is a poetic vivisectionist who sees man as a set of ingeniously designed internal organs and the world as a larger —but equally materialistic—projection of this microcosm.

As the supreme "poet of word surface", in Karabchievsky's phrase, Mayakovsky is "a poet without a reader", for his poetry—despite its fabled metaphoric intensity—excludes the reader as a creative partner:

It was this that hoisted me on the calvaries of rostrums
in towns and cities, low and high,
and there wasn't a soul who with dilated nostrils
didn't yell,
"Crucify!
Cru-ci-fy!"[18]

"Mayakovsky's metaphor", writes Karabchievsky, "is not a cluster of emerging associations, but a linear progression of images", which the reader may either follow with the certainty of an "Aye", or not follow with the certainty of a "Nay". The reader's work has been done for him, and his experience is no deeper than the predictable pleasures of decalcomania.

If contemplation of vengeance was the dominant theme of Mayakovsky's work before 1917, after that year he turns to its realisation as his subject. "When, five years earlier", writes Karabchievsky, "some fellow called for the destruction of all museums as 'tombs of culture', who cared? Who was going to take this harmless hooliganism seriously? Now the words were the same, but how differently they sounded!" Remarkably, Mayakovsky's plunge into the long-awaited orgy of destruction was received coolly by the régime, which was busy creating its own world, not Mayakovsky's, and destroying those people and institutions which stood in its way, not the people who had ignored Mayakovsky, or the institutions—those tombs of culture—which had excluded him. Lenin jotted down laconically on Mayakovsky's long poem "150,000,000" (1917):

> "Isn't it shameful to vote for 150,000,000 in a printing of 5,000? Nonsense, stupid, colossal stupidity and pretentiousness. I think we should print one out of ten things like this, and no more than 1,500 copies for libraries and eccentrics. Lunacharsky ought to be whipped for his futurism."[19]

Whatever Lunacharsky (or any other cultural authorities in the employ of the régime) thought of Mayakovsky's calls to arms, the client was obviously displeased.

IN FACT, Mayakovsky's long-nursed theme did not suit the régime any better than the compromise solution[20] worked out by the "wide circle of poets . . . including those who had accepted the Revolution and those who had rejected it". It is not only that the régime could afford to be discriminating in its choice of fellow-travellers; more importantly, it anticipated from the start that the totalitarian cultural orthodoxy of the future would leave no room for "individualism". A good, professional executioner should not be a maniacal sadist, killing to satisfy his personal wants; likewise, the poet of the totalitarian future would be a calm, professional propagandist, not an unpredictable, feverish individualist[21] whose personal motivations happened to correspond with the régime's. For this reason, the man who may be said to have given the Soviet régime its gift of speech was doomed to remain on the sidelines in his own lifetime. It was Pasternak—despite the fact that from 1912 to 1934 he had not written a single line for which the régime could somehow take credit[22]—who was given the place of honour at the first Writers' Congress in 1934, for as late as 1934 the new totalitarian cultural orthodoxy still had a place for one token individualist, an apolitical lyrist of genius. Precisely because Mayakovsky's theme was so close to the régime's political agenda, he was never to be treated as anything but a fellow-traveller, much less given the place of distinction among poets of the cultural Establishment in the making.

During the first twelve years of Soviet rule, calculates Karabchievsky, Mayakovsky wrote ten times as much as he had in the five years before 1917. Gone from his later verse was what had once been its sole humanising—and therefore poetic—force, the force of self-pity. There was nothing, it seemed, for him to complain about any longer without appearing hypocritical—except, that is, for those aspects of existence which biographers usually group under the rubric of "personal life".

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[17] This quotation (in my revision) and the preceding Mayakovsky quotations are from "Man", translated by Dorian Rottenberg.

[18] From "Cloud in Pants", translated by Dorian Rottenberg.

[19] A. V. Lunacharsky, Lenin's culture commissioner. There are many things, quips Karabchievsky, for which Lunacharsky should have been whipped, but futurism is not one of them.

[20] Not that Mayakovsky had not used that solution specifically, as in his "War and the World" (1916), for instance: "Russia! Has brigand Asia's fire cooled?" But for him this was obviously no "compromise".

[21] Mayakovsky's public behaviour was notorious. Karabchievsky describes a literary evening in the course of which a speaker said that no one present favoured the use of torture or the guillotine. "Wrong!" Mayakovsky yelled from his seat.

[22] Nor a line that was "human", as Marina Tsvetayeva put it in her essay on "The Epic and the Lyrical in Russia: Vladimir Mayakovsky and Boris Pasternak" (1932). Typically for Tsvetayeva in her role as a literary investigator, the brilliant essay revealed a great deal, but only about its author.

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Maayakovsky's personal life is such a tangle of unanswered questions that it is a blessing for his biographers in the West, especially because their Soviet colleagues prefer to concentrate on their subject's public persona.

Karabchievsky's view of Mayakovsky "as a human being" is more cynical than that of any other biographer, east or west. From Mayakovsky's physical appearance (he was not sonal habits (preoccupation with personal hygiene), from his private, daily hypocrisy (calling for the merciless persecution of "hoarders", he arranged lavish fêtes at his country house in Pushkino) to his intellectual duplicity (he was, for example, unable to stand the sight of blood, afraid of everything that could cause an injury, including penknives and ordinary needles), no side of the poet's personality is left unexamined and unscorned. Needless to say, Karabchievsky devotes much space to the examination of Mayakovsky's relationship with Lili Brik and her husband Osip Brik, the personal relationship central to his life after his first meeting with Lili in 1915. The factual complexities of this relationship are the subject of special studies, such as the Charters's biography, *I Love: The Story of Vladimir Mayakovsky and Lili Brik*, and, more recently, *Love is the Heart of Everything: Correspondence Between Vladimir Mayakovsky and Lili Brik*, edited by Bengt Jangfeldt.[23]

Futurism penetrated Russian culture almost immediately after the publication, on the front page of *Le Figaro* in February 1909, of the first "Futurist Manifesto" by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti at his own expense.[24] After 1917, with "Futurist" intellectuals leaning towards the increasingly dominant "proletarian" movement, the group—including Khlebnikov and Mayakovsky, who had founded it—was becoming dependent on the services of one of its least illustrious members: Osip Brik, an unsuccessful solicitor who dabbled in business and had literary pretensions. In the words of a Western scholar of Mayakovsky, who does not seem to have any fears of being misunderstood:

> "It was Mayakovsky who in 1915 aroused Osip's interest in poetry, thus changing the course of his life; Osip's brilliant intellectual qualities, trained until then on the study of law and trading in corals, were redirected towards literary and cultural-political questions. . . . At the same time as Mayakovsky 'reformed Osya's thinking', Osip was playing a decisive role in the development of Mayakovsky as man and poet."[25]

To be sure, what initially attracted Mayakovsky to this nonentity was his wife Lili, whose lover he soon became, apparently with Osip's consent. What initially attracted Brik, whom Mayakovsky would jokingly call "my wife's husband", to the younger poet was the chance to attach himself to a noisy, influential coterie of young intellectuals whose antics were dominating the headlines of the day's cultural chronicle. The odd family arrangement—Mayakovsky, the woman he loved, and her husband, who became his publisher, all living together in a small flat with an elegant "Brik:Mayakovsky" plate by the door-bell—was not too scandalous, or even remarkable, by the standards of Moscow's Bloomsbury.[26]

The remarkable thing is that, as the letters of *Love is the Heart of Everything* show, Mayakovsky's love for Lili was genuine, and for that reason the emotional ambiguities of this arrangement seem to have been accepted by him with every intention of rejuvenating the pity he needed to feel for himself once its external, social source dried up in the autumn of 1917. Indifference, not love, was the heart of everything for Mayakovsky, and when the world he could not possess was destroyed, he settled for the love of a married woman as the new source of his spiritual stimulation.

Practically, Mayakovsky's collaboration with Brik, who seems to have found his true calling as a kind of impresario to the Futurists, was a success, largely because of the connection with the régime which the resourceful pander was quick to establish. The full extent of that connection remains unknown, but Brik knew the régime's cultural linchpins, had *Cheka* members "with literary interests" among his intimates (he was employed by the *Cheka*, the predecessor of the *KGB*, from 1920 to 1924 as "legal adviser"), and when Mayakovsky and Brik founded their "associations"—*Komfut* (Communist Futurism), Maf (International Association of Futurists), Lef (Left Front of Art)—the régime was benevolent to their goals, which Brik helped to dress up in the most "relevant" banalities of the moment. It was a race against time, with the "official" critics snapping at Mayakovsky's heels all along the way.

"Give us art which is accessible to the simple eye and to simple common sense", one of them wrote in *Pravda* in 1921: "Enough of Mayakovskyism."[27] If, as Karabchievsky suggests in his chapter on Mayakovsky's "fellow bandits", the principal aim of the Futurists was to make Futurism the official aesthetic of the state, after 1918 their failure was apparent, final, and irreversible. But at least, thanks to Osip Brik, they were surviving.

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[23] Ann and Samuel Charters, *I Love: The Story of Vladimir Mayakovsky and Lili Brik* (André Deutsch, 1979). *Love is the Heart of Everything: Correspondence Between Vladimir Mayakovsky and Lili Brik 1915-1930*. Edited by Bengt Jangfeldt. Polygon, £9.95.

[24] The lasting impact of futurism on world culture was the subject of a recent retrospective at the Palazzo Grassi in Venice. The monumental exhibition received much press coverage (see, for instance, "Futurists and the Cult of Energy", by Henry Martin, *Art News*, October 1986), but the very words "history of futurism" had a funereal resonance in many of the reviews.

[25] Bengt Jangfeldt in his Introduction to *Love is the Heart of Everything*. Karabchievsky is especially merciless on Brik's intellectual qualities as he quotes at length from his novella *Not a Fellow Traveller* (*Nye poputchitsa*) in which, incidentally, the heroine tells her husband: "We are Communists, not Philistines, and a marital drama is impossible between us, is it not?"

[26] With the difference that in Russia questions of private morality had a political content. In response to directives from the Commissariat of Social Welfare (Aleksandra Kollontai, Lenin's welfare commissioner, was officially opposed to marriage), in the early years of Soviet rule provincial soviets went so far as to establish Offices of Free Love, choosing "mates" for "men aged 19-50" in the "interests of the state". See *Brak i semya v SSSR* (*Marriage and Family in the USSR*) (Moscow, 1964).

[27] As quoted in Bengt Jangfeldt, *Love is the Heart of Everything*, p. 228.

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IT IS THE INFORMATION on Brik's role as the Futurists', and specifically Mayakovsky's, political lifeline that allows us to understand Karabchievsky's most significant biographical discovery—the specific intellectual influence on Mayakovsky of Brik and his friends. Apart from serving as the poet's adviser on such matters as syntax and punctuation, Brik took upon himself the task of "educating" the poet, providing him with "suitable" material, including books and ideas. Among these, of crucial importance were the writings of Nikolai Fedorov.

Fedorov, who is believed to have been born in 1828 and died in 1903, lived in obscurity as a librarian in Moscow, published nothing in his lifetime, and left a pile of manuscripts, published after his death by his well-wishers under the title *The Philosophy of the Common Task*. Fedorov's idea, emanating from him through his small circle of disciples, began to assert itself among Russian intellectuals as early as the 1870s, fascinating writers like Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Fet, and later philosophers like Vladimir Soloviev and Nikolai Berdyaev. The Western authority on Fedorov, George Young, calmly includes both Joseph Stalin and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn among those influenced by Fedorov later in the century.[28]

The "common task" which obsessed Fedorov was the struggle with death, for which all mankind must be intellectually mobilised and whose ultimate goal is the resurrection of the dead. Fedorov's teaching combined science (if bad science fiction is science) with philosophy (if any obtuse rambling is philosophy); and the final product—materialistic and apocalyptic, literal yet unintelligible, scientistic but implausible—was the intellectual gift the Brik circle bestowed on Mayakovsky. Fedorovism was their interpretation of the ubiquitous theme, just materialistic enough to accept, just transcendent enough to believe in.[29]

Absorbed in scenes "out of Fedorov", both in his verse and in his plays, Mayakovsky began to contemplate the prospects of resurrection with the literalism Karabchievsky finds characteristic of his work from the start. Apart from connecting the universality of Fedorov's "task" with the collectivism of the Soviet régime, he began to dream of his personal resurrection as a fitting reward for his life on earth.[30] In his study of Fedorov, George Young writes that the

> "call to resurrect the dead found some support among Soviet officials. L. B. Krasin, a high Communist Party official, a former Commissar of Trade and Ambassador to Britain and France, stated publicly . . . that 'science would achieve the resurrection of the dead'—but Krasin, contrary to Fedorov's teachings, held that not all, but only an élite few, those most valuable to the state, would be deemed worthy of resurrection. . . . [In] the early years of Soviet rule medical scientists directed considerable energy to the problem of 'resurrecting corpses'—and one wonders . . . if the decision to preserve Lenin's body might not have been prompted by Fedorovistic anticipations."

Krasin was one of the Briks' intimates, and it is small wonder—as Karabchievsky suggests—that Mayakovsky began to dream of a future into which he and Lili, not Osip, would be resurrected by the discerning state.

NOW MAYAKOVSKY BEGAN to suffocate in the indifference in which he had once wallowed, for totalitarian indifference was nothing like the old world's unconcern. Now he was confronted with the ultimate reasons for misery and self-pity: even if his beloved chose to be resurrected alongside him, would the future Soviet leaders deem him worthy of the privilege? Finding some relief in frequent trips abroad or in the attentions of other women, Mayakovsky did all he could to establish himself in the eyes of the régime. But the women were fickle, and the régime was more fickle still. In fact, the régime—and by 1930 this meant Stalin—was growing tired of Mayakovsky's attempts to attract its attention. The Fedorovian dream of living, as Karabchievsky puts it, "in the universal concentration camp of the future" was all but dashed in the last year of Mayakovsky's life, when everything he attempted—from his retrospective exhibition to the production of his plays to the publication of his books by the state publishing house—flopped dramatically.

The Briks went abroad, "on a cultural mission". Earlier, Mayakovsky had been refused an exit visa, and it is believed that the Briks—growing ever more distant—had something to do with that mishap.[31] Despite his continued desperate

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[28] George M. Young, Jr., *Nikolai Fedorov: An Introduction* (1979).

[29] Nikolai Berdyaev (as quoted by George Young, in *Nikolai Fedorov*, p. 195) described a meeting of an "anarchist club" in 1918-19:

> "The whole atmosphere was significant of the elemental forces behind the Revolution, exalting in the downfall of intolerable restraints, wanton, unbridled, ruthless. . . . One worker read a paper on the Gospel in which he affirmed as scientifically proved that the Mother of God was a prostitute and Jesus Christ the illegitimate son of a Roman soldier. . . . A follower of Fedorov [concluded] by proclaiming that, since the maximum social programme had already been put into practice, 'the cosmic resurrection of the dead' will occur any moment."

Berdyaev describes the Fedorovian's beliefs as "some incredible hotch-potch of science, gnosticism, and the Gospels".

[30] It is not unusual in our "scientific" age for people possessed by grief to dream of resurrecting their loved ones. David Pryce-Jones recently described a French doctor who had been keeping his wife's body refrigerated since her death in 1984 ("The Chilling Secret of Dr Martinot", *The Sunday Times Magazine*, 9 November 1986).

By contrast, Mayakovsky was preoccupied primarily with his own resurrection. The linguist Roman Jakobson (quoted by George Young, *Nikolai Fedorov*, p. 192) described a meeting with Mayakovsky in 1920, during which the poet:

> "made me repeat several times my confused account of the general theory of relativity. . . . I had rarely seen him so attentive and animated. 'But don't you think', he suddenly blurted, 'that that's how immortality will be achieved?' I looked amazed. . . . 'But I am absolutely convinced that there will be no death. They will resurrect the dead.' . . . For me at that moment an entirely different Mayakovsky was revealed: the demand that death be conquered possessed him."

[31] In summing up the Briks' role in Mayakovsky's life, Karabchievsky cautions the reader about "blaming everything on the Briks". He finds this notion xenophobic and—like the idea that had there been no Jews there would have been no Revolution—primitive. The Briks and their friends merely pointed Mayakovsky in one of the myriad intellectual directions open to him, many of which were equally trivial.

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attempts to save his "future", Mayakovsky sensed that, as far as his immediate destiny was concerned, he was out of favour, to be dispensed with at the earliest opportunity. The ringleader of universal destruction and bloody mayhem was about to become a victim, a casualty; the tireless purge-master of "our literature", of cultural individualism, was to be purged as an individualist, a useless anachronism. He decided to stake his all, there and then, on what he had achieved. If he waited, they would never resurrect him.

FIVE YEARS AFTER the shot rang out in the building a stone's throw from the Lubyanka headquarters of the secret police, Mayakovsky's gamble paid off. He *was* resurrected—or, in Pasternak's view, killed for all time—by the hand of Stalin, who said that indifference to Mayakovsky's work was a crime. He said so in response to Lili Brik's letter pleading for rehabilitation on the grounds that Mayakovsky's work was a "revolutionary weapon" (and a dead individualist, she might have added, was an individualist no more).

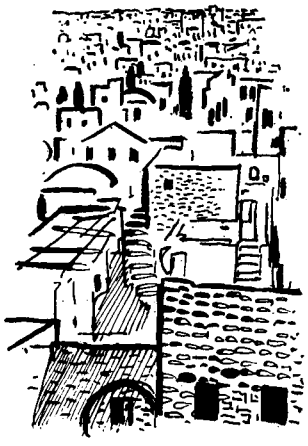
So great was the indifference to Mayakovsky's work by 1935 that, paradoxically, Pasternak felt compelled to thank Stalin with a personal letter of his own for this act of posthumous mercy. Of course, the supreme irony inherent in the act was that the literal resurrection of which the poet had dreamed was impossible. He was resurrected metaphorically.

In thanking Stalin for the resurrection of Mayakovsky, Pasternak was thanking him for reviving the memory of the man he identified with his own youth. The energy of Mayakovsky's metaphorical thinking had paved the way for the revelations of *My Sister—Life*, and it was not Mayakovsky's increasing proximity to the régime but the increasing literalism[32] of his poetic apprehension of reality that had estranged him from Pasternak. To Pasternak, Mayakovsky was dead by 1917. By 1935, all he wanted for his "teacher" was a proper funeral.

[32] In a postscript to his study, Karabchievsky finds evidence of "Mayakovskian" literalism in the metaphoric thinking of such poets as Joseph Brodsky and even Tsvetayeva, but it is in the productions of the reigning Soviet triumvirate of "Mayakovsky's heirs" —Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Andrei Voznesensky, and Robert Rozhdestvensky—that it continues to exist in its most virulent form.

Gentiles & Other Wounded Spirits

Israel's Friends & Relations—By MALCOLM YAPP



THE MUSEUM of the Diaspora in Tel Aviv seems an appropriate place in which to begin an inquiry into the relations between Israeli Jews and others. The exhibits furnish an account of the history of Jewish communities throughout the world; models illustrate the interiors of Jewish homes; and the activities of notable Jews are recorded on cards. A visit to the museum leaves an outsider with a sense of the variety of Jewish life and with some admiration for the way in which Jewish communities created decent and sometimes brilliant lives for their members in different surroundings. Reflection upon the exhibition also raises questions of which two seem pertinent here. What happened to the Diaspora? And what happened to Spinoza?

The Museum propounds a clear answer to the first question. The great majority of the Jewish communities of the Diaspora was extinguished as a result of violence or the threat of violence, and the survivors came to Israel. Most of the sections devoted to the European communities end with a brief notice recording the murder of their members; those dealing with the communities of Western Asia and Africa commonly conclude with a short account of an exodus to Israel. A visitor is left with the impression that the Diaspora was a charming blind alley for the Jewish people, an historical aberration that was frequently punished by death and was ended by the creation of the state of Israel. In the Museum of the Holocaust in Jerusalem the same point is made yet more strongly. It is true that there is acknowledgement of the achievements of the Diaspora, and that the almost contemptuous rejection which was common before 1950 has gone. But for all the sympathy the message is clear, and it is the same message which was proclaimed by Herzl: the Diaspora was unviable.

Several writers have remarked upon the oddity of this message. More Jews live outside Israel than live in that country, and the Jews of the Diaspora have never been so prosperous or so successful as they are today. Others have pointed out that it is not the Diaspora but Israel which is apparently unviable, and that without the financial and political support of Jews outside Israel the Jewish state could certainly not exist in the form it does, and might not exist at all. Without unreasonably misrepresenting the life of the Diaspora one might have devoted half the Museum to representing the history and achievements of the largest, richest, and most brilliant Jewish community which has ever existed—that of the United States. American Jews walking around the Museum must experience a curious mixture of sensations. But what of non-Jews?

I once remarked to a British Rabbi from a Reformed con-

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gregation that I felt some misgivings at what I took to be the Museum's suggestion that a number of my more valued fellow citizens should not be in Britain at all. He became rather angry at what I presume he regarded as the gratuitous comments of a Gentile about matters which did not concern him and which he did not understand, namely the bonds between Jew and Jew, and between Jews and the land of Israel. I let the matter drop. However, the thought that the British way of life cannot comprehend or satisfy a group of people established here for many years (individuals are a different matter) is one which troubles an English mind, and I sought enlightenment in *Diaspora Blues*.[1]

Clive Sinclair, a novelist and former literary editor of *The Jewish Chronicle*, believes that he has a dual loyalty: to the language of England and the history of Israel. Culture is one thing, history another, he argues, as did George Steiner in an ENCOUNTER article on the Holocaust ("The Long Life of Metaphor", February 1987). One may imbibe the language of a country but not its history. "How", Sinclair asks (adapting the question posed by Edward Said), "does a Jewish father tell his son that St Albans is where we are, but not where we are from?" That, of course, is a problem for the majority of fathers in St Albans because it is a city of immigrants. The important matter is what their sons will say, and that possibility brings us to the second question posed by the Diaspora Museum: what happened to Spinoza?

IN THE SECTION OF THE MUSEUM devoted to the Dutch Jewish community there is no card for Benedict Spinoza. The reason is plain. Spinoza was expelled from the Jewish community in 1656, and although he was never fully accepted by his Christian fellow-citizens his thinking drew him into the mainstream of European philosophy and metaphysics and away from the traditional preoccupations of Jewish scholars. Spinoza is a dazzling omission from the Museum; and an ambiguous one, for he was left in a no-man's land much like that inhabited by Sinclair. A transitional figure, Spinoza may stand for all those Diaspora Jews who quietly assimilated to their surroundings.

How many these were no one can tell, but a little playing with statistics may suggest that the greatest number of Jews in the world (according to the orthodox definition) have melted into the societies in which they live. Like millions of people in the United States they apparently found a new history to fit their new culture, probably in the same school. It is this circumstance which underpins Sinclair's assertion that "the only way of Jewish survival is Israel because outside assimilation is the dominant force".

In *Promise and Fulfilment* Arthur Koestler vividly reiterated an argument as old as Zionism: the establishment of the state of Israel would end the Jewish problem because Jews would choose either to return or to assimilate. It is ironic that the very reverse appears to have taken place: by providing a focus of Jewish identity the existence of the state of Israel serves to prevent the assimilation which otherwise might have taken place. Israel is an insurance policy for the Diaspora; while the memory of the Holocaust remains strong, the premiums will be paid. A claim to membership of the Diaspora is also an insurance for Israelis; even that passionate Zionist Rabbi Meir Kahane refused for three years to make the formal declaration of allegiance required of all Knesset members lest he forfeit his US citizenship.

The Law of Return binds Israeli and Diaspora Jews in unforeseen ways. On the one hand it guarantees payment on the policy and on the other it makes other policies invalid. In July 1987 the request of a South African Jew to be given political asylum in Britain was denied on the grounds that he could go to Israel, "which was his first and natural country of asylum". Much early Zionist discussion was taken up with the distinction between Jewish state and Jewish national home and with the relative importance to be attached to the political and the cultural components of the entity which was to be created. No one seems to have contemplated an entity which possessed both attributes in full measure—or how this circumstance would affect both Israel and the Diaspora.

THE COMPLEXITIES OF the relations of Israeli Jew and Diaspora Jew are matched by the ambivalences of the relations of Israeli Jew and Palestinian Arab. Michael Palumbo's *The Palestinian Catastrophe*[2] presents a simple version of that second relationship. According to this version, the leaders of the *Yishuv* wanted to get rid of the Arabs, and took advantage of the 1948 war to force them out of Israeli-held territory. Behind this formulation are two distinct questions. Was there a long-developed plan to expel the Arabs from the Jewish state? And did the Jews drive out the Arabs in 1948?

The answer to the first question is almost certainly "no". Although it is easy to argue from general principles and with hindsight that it was beneficial for Israel that the Arabs should leave, and although it is possible to find statements by several Zionists from Herzl onwards to the effect that the departure of the Arabs would be exceedingly convenient, it is clear that before 1948 Zionists gave little serious and consistent thought to the long-term future of the Arabs. Much was written about the Arabs, but most of it was about tactical rather than strategic problems. The consensus was that the Arabs would become a national minority and would be treated at least as well as national minorities elsewhere.

The answer to the second question is much less clear. Three explanations for the Arab exodus of 1948 have been offered. These are: first, that the Arabs were persuaded to depart by commands from Arab leaders and left despite the pleas of Jews that they should remain; second, that they fled out of fear like other civilian populations confronted by war, and with the intention of returning when the violence had subsided; and third, that they were driven out by Jewish actions. Michael Palumbo's book, which brings together various sources including British and United Nations documents, is the fullest expression of that third view which has so far

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[1] *Diaspora Blues: A View of Israel.* By CLIVE SINCLAIR. Heinemann, £11.95.

[2] *The Palestinian Catastrophe: The 1948 Expulsion of a People from their Homeland.* By MICHAEL PALUMBO. Faber & Faber, £12.95.

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appeared. It is persuasive in regard to some episodes but it does not eliminate the first two explanations.

In Jaffa, in much of Galilee, and in the Lydda-Ramleh region, there is good evidence that Jewish actions did result in the expulsion of Arabs. In Tiberias (not mentioned by Palumbo) there is good evidence that the Jewish inhabitants asked the Arabs to stay. In Haifa—although Palumbo shows that the story that al-Haj Amin al-Husayni urged the Arabs to leave is false, and that frightening Jewish violence did take place—the Arabs did in the end leave voluntarily, despite Jewish efforts to persuade them to remain. What happened in the Jerusalem area is unclear. Much depends on what one believes the effect of the massacre at Dir Yasin to have been: Israeli writers commonly refer to Arab fears of exaggerated reports of this incident. Palumbo demonstrates that the reports were not exaggerated at all: Dir Yasin was a beastly affair. But it is exceedingly difficult to determine what Arabs knew of it at the time and what conclusions as to their own actions they drew from it. Palumbo estimates that of the three-quarters of a million refugees about one third were driven out, one third fled because of threats, etc., and one third left out of fear. The chief cause of the exodus, he claims, was Zionist terrorism. That terrorism was an important factor seems indisputable, but the estimate of one third who were driven out seems too high and it is difficult to distinguish between those who left as a result of threats and those who left out of fear. His proportions are guesswork.

Over 150,000 Palestinian Arabs did not leave Zionist-held territory, and those Israeli Arabs, now approaching half a million as a result of one of the most rapid rates of natural increase in the world, form a large part of the subject of *Arab and Jew*, David Shipler's massive study of Jewish-Arab relations.[3] The work is based principally upon his observations, conversations, and reflections during his time in Israel as an American newspaper correspondent (for the *New York Times*). The situation of the Israeli Arabs is that contemplated by the Zionists of the 1920s and 1930s, namely that of a national minority within a Jewish majority state. When that position had been achieved, the Zionists believed, justice could be and would be done to the Arabs, who would be equal citizens in every respect save that their co-religionists, unlike Jews, would not have the right to reside in the Jewish state.

THE REALITY, it seems, falls some way below that ideal. Partly, it may be argued, the disabilities of Arabs are a consequence of the problems of security: as long as Arabs outside Israel will not accept the Jewish state, so long will Arabs inside Israel be regarded as potential or actual fifth-columnists. But this is plainly not the whole story. Leaving aside the legal restrictions on Arabs, they are not accepted as social equals; the verdict of early Zionist settlers upon the Arabs—essentially that they were uncivilised—remains the opinion of very many Israeli Jews today.

Just as it was widely believed that the relations of Jew and Jew would be fundamentally altered by the establishment of the state of Israel, so it was thought that the relations of Jew and Arab would be similarly transformed. To those whose business it is to study the history of Zionism and of the Middle East before 1948 it is striking how little has changed. In particular the range of older Zionist attitudes towards the Arabs seems to be well represented in Israel today. The bi-nationalists with their belief in peace and cooperation are represented by the Peace Now movement. The vision of the Weizmannite liberals with their hopes of a solution to the problem by international agreement may be seen to be reflected in the emphases of men like Abba Eban. The socialist Zionists' commitment to a local solution can be traced in the Jordan strategy of the Labour Alignment. And the preoccupations of the Revisionists are easily discernible in the attitudes of the activists of *Likud* with their focus on control and settlement of the West Bank, and their sinister conviction that one day the problem will be solved by the disappearance of the Arabs from all the land of Israel. Reading Shipler's book, one may feel that Arab attitudes have changed much more than have Jewish opinions on their relations with one another; whereas formerly the Arabs regarded their Jewish neighbours with contempt, they now look at them with that mixture of fear and admiration which we reserve for those elevated far above us. It is not usually an attitude which endures.

THE THIRD great relationship in the history of Zionism has been that between Zionists and the world of the Great Powers. One may discover several ingredients in that relationship. There is, first, an element of sentiment deriving both from sympathy for Zionism because of its apparent vindication of Christian visions of the future of the world (as among the Born Again Christians of the United States) and from sympathy for Jews because of their sufferings from the late 19th century onwards and especially during the Second World War. A second ingredient has been hostility to Jews and a feeling of guilt as a consequence of that hostility. If Jews from the Pale did not go to Palestine they would go to Europe or the United States, and governments during the late 19th and early 20th centuries found it increasingly difficult to ignore the discontent in their countries directed against the immigrants.

It comes as a shock to see how openly Theodor Herzl used this argument in his effort to obtain the support of Great Powers for Zionism: if you do not back my programme, he implied, you will be overrun by all these ragged, uncouth people from the Pale. Of the two great makers of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, Lloyd George has been classified among the Christian sympathisers and Balfour among those who sought to assuage the guilt they felt at excluding Jews from Britain. Such metaphysical or psychological elements, however, although they have always figured in discussions of the relationship between Zionism and the Great Powers, have usually occupied a subsidiary place. First place

[3] *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land*. By DAVID K. SHIPLER. Bloomsbury, £17.95.

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in that relationship is commonly given to politics, and, above all, to strategy.

The strategic link between Zionism and the Great Powers was formed by the contention that the existence of a Jewish population (and subsequently of a Jewish state) in Palestine or its vicinity was beneficial to the interests of various Great Powers in the East. That benefit might accrue either from the support of the *Yishuv* or from the gratitude of the Diaspora. To Abd al-Hamid II, the Ottoman Sultan, Herzl promised financial salvation and relief from the burden of the obligations of his debts to Europe, and to Joseph Chamberlain he wanted to offer ten million secret but faithful subjects. During the First World War the strategic arguments became much more explicit; a Jewish Palestine would become a reliable buffer for a British-controlled Egypt against either the Ottomans or the Germans or France in Syria. Further, support for Zionism would enlist the sympathy of Jews everywhere for the Allied cause.

In the post-War world the strategic arguments altered but remained prominent. Palestine could become a substitute for Egypt if British control of that country slipped. And support for Zionism might diminish the threat of world revolution by diverting the energies of its most dangerous supporters, the Jews of Eastern Europe, from Bolshevism to nation-building —much as Methodism was held to have served as a substitute for revolution among the new industrial classes of England during the 19th century. Most recently it has been asserted that Israel forms a bastion of Western influence and a potential base for Western operations in a region threatened by the disruptive forces of Arab nationalism and of Islamic revivalism.

STRATEGIC THEORIES are claims upon scarce resources, and rival claims upon the same resources are backed by different strategic theories. The principal rival of the Zionist strategic theories has been the Arab strategies. At various times it has been asserted that the interests of Britain or of the United States would be better served by a deal with this or that group of Arabs. The rejection of the claims of Zionism in the 1939 White Paper was the consequence of a Foreign Office view that the support of Arab states was a better defence for Britain against Axis intrusion in the Middle East than was the support of Zionists (which in any case was unlikely to be lost to Germany). And between 1945 and 1947 Ernest Bevin's Palestine policy was a subordinate element in his grand strategy aimed at ensuring the economic and political leadership of Britain in the Arab world. In the United States the State Department has often struck a similar balance in its assessment of how American interests might best be protected.

Several of the essays in *National and International Politics in the Middle East*, a collection edited by Edward Ingram,[4] deal with aspects of this Arab strategy. The essays are written in honour of Elie Kedourie, who has argued that Foreign Office support for Pan-Arab policies was based partly on a misreading of the situation which obtained in the 1930s and partly on a prejudice either in favour of Arabs or against Jews. In particular, Kedourie identified Arnold Toynbee, then Director of Studies at Chatham House, as being influential in shaping the thinking of Britons about the Middle East—both at the time and, still more, subsequently. Toynbee, he suggested, created "the Chatham House version", an interpretation of Middle Eastern history in terms of the Arab betrayed. The emphasis which Kedourie placed upon the psychological attitudes of Toynbee (as he has also emphasised the psychology of George Rendel) is followed in an essay by Gordon Martel, who suggests that Toynbee's views arose from the hopes and the despair which he experienced during the First World War.

It is possible to devise apparently persuasive arguments for an Arab strategy. The Arabs are more numerous; they were in possession of Palestine and still control most of the region; they have proved an ability to trouble Great Powers either through violence or through economic means; and they are also an important element in the Muslim factor. (Since my purpose here is not to discuss the merits of these arguments, the question of whether "the Arabs" exist as an entity which has some utility in terms of strategic discussion will not be considered.) Against these arguments, those which may be advanced on behalf of a Zionist strategy seem less obviously convincing; indeed, a case can be made without difficulty for seeing Israel as a strategic liability to the Western powers.

When one considers the dubious balance-sheet of strategic advantage and the prejudices of those who have drawn up those accounts and formulated policies, one is left to wonder whether strategy has in the past played any real part in the relationship between Zionism and the Great Powers, and whether it is of any consequence at the present time. The insistence on the centrality of strategy by many recent historians of the Balfour Declaration and of British involvement in Palestine, and the stress placed by modern commentators upon the strategic calculations which underpin the policies of the United States in the region seem quite unconvincing. Their arguments depend upon the careful selection of evidence and especially upon the exclusion of other important considerations.

This is not to suggest that these writers deliberately deceive their readers; rather that they deceive themselves by their belief that Great Powers act as they do through a careful calculation of the balance of advantage. A policy built on the hope of useful economic, political, or strategic gains seems the sort of policy which a Great Power should have, not a policy founded upon whim or sentiment or prestige. And yet there is no more powerful motive of policy than prestige. In the last analysis Great Powers behave as they think Great Powers should behave; to do otherwise would be to surrender their claims to be Great Powers. (If Tam Dalyell, MP, had understood that proposition, or had been able to accept it, he might have spared us his grotesque pursuit of rationality in the Falklands.)

Whatever calculations of advantage may have fed the Balfour Declaration decision in 1917, Britain quickly came to the

[4] *National and International Politics in the Middle East: Essays in Honour of Elie Kedourie*. Edited by EDWARD INGRAM. Frank Cass, £25.00.

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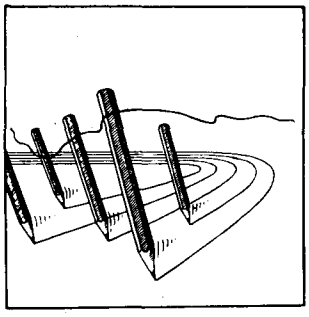
conclusion that there was no significant strategic advantage in Palestine which was worth the likely cost. The reason why she did not then change the basis of her policy was simply fear of the blow to her prestige if she were obliged to go back to the League of Nations and confess that she had made a mistake.

State papers are stuffed with strategic theories. These theories fulfil two purposes: first, they dignify discussion of the allocation of resources; and, second, they provide a common language in which that discourse can be conducted. The real world of choice, dominated by prejudice, personal ambition and rivalry, prestige and sentiment, can never be represented in a Weberian system.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the relationship between Israel and the world of the Great Powers has been expressed in the artificial language of strategy or in that other favourite language of those who have given up trying to understand politics, namely the language of psephology. The efficient relationship is one which cannot be expressed, because the factors cannot be weighed—and if they could be weighed would be suppressed out of shame.

Secular Shrines

The Critic as Therapist, & Vice Versa—By ERIC RHODE



I AM THINKING OF a child and the way she draws. She sits before a piece of paper, takes pencil in hand and without hesitation releases an image on the page. There is no object before her. She does not transcribe. Equally clearly, she gives no sign of transmitting some image from within her "inner world". No frowning, no looking inward, no dreamy look in her eyes. The flow of her pencil seems automatic; and yet the joy in her calligraphy, and its knack—the way she catches the likeness of flower or balloon—is essentially human.

Arguably, art is a transaction between presences within and without the self. Cezanne, before the Mont Sainte-Victoire, is thought to derive courage from the nature of otherness as he tries to secure the motif. Picasso on the other hand allows images (presumably from within) to articulate themselves on the paper without external prompting. Art gesticulates thought. In the same way, body movements express a kind of thinking.

So the theory goes. But does it really apply to art? When the child marries pencil to paper, the drawing spontaneously flows. She feels no hunger for food; almost nothing can stop the pencil and paper from living our their existence together; their coming together creates a setting; and the setting is her inspiration.

Dr Anthony Fry, in *Safe Space*, his reassuring new study of "the ecology of the person", rightly asserts the need for good spaces, sites in which we can thrive—mind has its own ecology.[1] The etymology of "contemplation" indicates our need to find a templum, or sacred place, in which to think. The ancients believed that the shelter in which you slept determined the nature of your dreams. Figuratively, this is true. Dreams are conditioned by the places mind inhabits—and the meaning of the places mind inhabits can be transfigured by dreams. Jacob, tarrying the night in the middle of nowhere, dreamt; and when he awoke knew from his dream that God was in this place. "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

For bookish men, the shrine at which they tarry might be within a book. Milton toyed with the idea of an Arthuriad; it remained unrealised. Discovering how the Book of Genesis lay at the core of his emotional being—at the core where the unknowable can transform into meaning—he lay down in the grove of Holy Writ, and dreamt *Paradise Lost*. Art, like life, lives you out and then frees you into death. Adam does not create God in his own image—God, the unknowable, creates Adam.

The "major thing" about *Paradise Lost*, according to William Empson, "is the fascination of its barbaric power". He compared it to "appalling" African sculpture—Benin artworks, which "raised my spirit no end". To a lesser extent than George Fox perhaps, Milton was taken over by Holy Writ, as though it were a holy place that determined his dreams. Text acts him out, shapes his body, gesturing cosmic lunges, upward sweeps, sheer falls. The cosmos, and the very initial moment of time, are his introspective sites.

Meg Harris Williams might warm to this approach. Some time ago she wrote on a theory of inspiration that both Milton and Keats subscribed to.[2] A chapter title invokes life as "the vale of soul-making": the vale is no mere allegorical place; psychological transformation depends for its being on the nature of its setting. Keats suggested to James Rice (in a letter of 24 March 1818, whose importance, Meg Harris Williams believes, has been underrated):

> "Milton ere he wrote his Answer to Salmasius came into these parts, and for one whole Month, rolled himself, for

[1] *Safe Space: How to Survive in a Threatening World.* By ANTHONY FRY. Dent, £12.95.

[2] Meg Harris Williams, *Inspiration in Milton and Keats* (1962).

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> three whole hours in a certain meadow hard by us—where the mark of his nose at equidistances is still shown . . . after these rollings, not a nettle sprang up in all the seven acres in seven years and . . . from said time a new sort of plant was made. . . ."

The place inspires the barbaric poet to revolve. Visiting Fingal's Cave, Keats conjures up Milton as Oceanus—the site, not the awesome hairy muse, being the primary source of his inspiration. He came close, Mrs Williams argues, to "finding the Birthplace of poetry in this secret, magic cave". Perhaps the inside-outside model of perception does not apply to the artist whose creativity is informed with yearnings for a uterine time when inside and outside had not taken on being.

In the Bible, in the one known act of male parturition, God puts Adam into "a deep sleep" before obstetrically removing his rib-wife. Did Adam dream; or was he stupefied? A tantalising question, which Genesis leaves unanswered. Milton thinks Adam *did* dream: of a wife who was yet to be. Keats wrote: "The Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream—he awoke and found it truth."

More recently, in *A Strange Way of Killing*,[3] in which she investigates the nature of passionate experience in *Wuthering Heights*, Mrs Williams has returned to secular shrines. One of the narrators in *Wuthering Heights*, Lockwood (in her view, an active, even therapeutic presence), dreams of Catherine's ghost. The dream would be more appropriate to Heathcliff, who had loved Catherine in life; but Heathcliff lacks the capacity at this time to have the dream; he needs Lockwood, as an intermediary, to affect the process of reconciliation with the self he might become. (Having the dream will bring him fulfilment and death.) The site of the dream is all-important: the former oak-closet bed of the dead woman, coffin- or stagecoach-like, "enclosing the only window in the house which it is possible to climb out of". The symbolising details of the interior of the oak-closet fascinate Mrs Williams—it contains among other things Catherine's diary, stacked among neglected theological tracts.

Lockwood gets into Catherine's "faded hieroglyphics" before he dreams of her ghost at the window. His reading of the diary, like any act of reading—like Adam's dream in fact—arouses imagination: we awake from the text to find it true.

Mrs Williams is opposed to psychoanalysis as a form of olympian understanding. She stands in a different field from Professor Bowie, who dazzlingly performs in the service of Lacan (and incidentally sees Carpaccio as "a Proustian painter").[4] Experience, she believes, in art as in life, can dissolve the self, allowing us to rediscover our native helplessness in the face of the elements. Useful critics are therapists, working on us as Lockwood does; they encourage openness of response—and help us to have the dreams of the beloved that, as yet, we lack the capacity to dream. As Catherine says (it is Mrs Williams's key quotation):

> "I've dreamt in my life dreams that have stayed with me ever after, and changed my ideas; they've gone through and through me, like wine through water, and altered the colour of my mind."

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[3] *A Strange Way of Killing: The Poetic Structure of Wuthering Heights*. By Meg Harris Williams. Clunie Press (dist. H. Karnac), £15.00.

[4] *Freud, Proust, and Lacan: Theory as Fiction*. By Malcolm Bowie. Cambridge University Press, £25.00.

Brecon Beacons

There's a great wariness about them.
For wet weeks on end
There they will lie
Their massive muscles slack
Camouflaged in thick cloud
Curled up pretending
Really perhaps asleep
Dozing grey days away
As though not alive.
And then one windy night
Off they will go
As fast moving as vast
Sound ricocheting round
Prowling across the sky.
And next day you will see
The grass round all flat
Where they have trampled it
Every wall in holes
Where they've stampeded through
The local people know:
Maps only show their naps.

Eddie Flintoff

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Books Encountered

Duke Ellington. By JAMES LINCOLN COLLIER. Michael Joseph, £15.95.

Cool, balanced account of Ellington, his music, and his times, by an accredited jazz historian who has already done the same for Louis Armstrong. "When jazz becomes confounded with art", he writes, "passion flies out and pretension flies in." So he condemns some of the empty, imitative, extended works, but celebrates the improvised three-minute pieces he sees as Ellington's forte.

Readings in the Philosophical Problems of Parapsychology. Edited by ANTHONY FLEW. Prometheus Books, $24.95, paper $16.95.

Learned, wide-ranging, and rational anthology, with contributions from Plato, Hobbes, Descartes, and Hume as well as Rhine, Broad, Flew himself, and other modern experts, linked by a commentary beginning with definitions, descriptions, and attempted explanations of weird phenomena, and embracing precognition, scepticism, fraud, and survival. Scepticism courteously wins.

Hess: The Missing Years 1941-1945. By DAVID IRVING. Macmillan, £16.95.

Exhaustive, rather dispiriting blow-by-blow account of Hess's captivity, based on notes by his keepers, his own letters, and other previously inaccessible sources. The only question unanswered, because apparently unasked, is the key one: was "Hess" Hess? Irving, like most people, has no real doubts on this score.

Myrna Loy: Being and Becoming. By JAMES KOTSILIBAS-DAVIS and MYRNA LOY. Bloomsbury, £14.95.

Generous of her to put her ghost-writer first: but characteristic of this zesty, frank, and amusing autobiography, full of snapshot accounts of co-stars and shrewd dealings with producers. Tough Welsh ancestry shows: so does concern with Democratic politics. She opposes Reagan, but admits he has "theatrical charm".

The Films of Carol Reed. By ROBERT F. MOSS. Macmillan, £29.50.

Well-written if slightly cobbled together: its first 60 pages or so supply a potted history of British films up to 1939. But it was time to re-evaluate the finest director of that native generation; and Moss convincingly identifies *Odd Man Out* as Reed's masterpiece, despite the seductions of *The Fallen Idol* and *The Third Man*.

Zoo Culture. By BOB MULLAN and GARRY MARVIN. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £12.95.

The authors bring TV experience but also anthropology, sociology, and psychology to bear on the bizarre and, some would say, outrageous phenomenon of goggling at our captive fellow-creatures, like 18th-century crowds attending hangings, or city gents watching building sites. According to Mullan and Marvin, the name of the game is power.

Fools for God. By RICHARD NORTH. Collins, £10.95.

More captives, this time voluntary: monks. North has written a very personal account of his acquaintance with monasticism, based partly on reading (Knowles, Merton, Furlong, *et al.*) and more directly on conversations and visits to both Eastern and Western monasteries. Higher journalism; but sympathetic and honest. No index, and a good misprint: "the seed of doubt has been sewn." Plain or pearl?

The Faith Healers. By JAMES RANDI. Prometheus Books, $18.95.

A hostile magician's exposé of such American evangelist "healers" as Peter Popoff, Pat Robertson, W. V. Grant, and Oral Roberts. Carl Sagan, in the Foreword, describes Randi as "rambling, anecdotal, crotchety, and ecumenically offensive". Yes: but he's also the author of *The Truth About Uri Geller*, as well as a book on Houdini. So his scepticism deserves attention—sceptical attention. Some healers seem to work.

Mass-Observation at the Movies. Edited by JEFFREY RICHARDS and DOROTHY SHERIDAN. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £35.95.

Painstaking trawl of Mass-Observation archives on cinema-going and reactions in worktown (Bolton) and wartime (newsreels, Ministry of Information shorts, and such feature films as *The Lion Has Wings, Let George Do It,* and *The Great Dictator*). Catharsis seems to have been their most important function; but many of the respondents' comments are refreshingly tart.

Turn-of-the-Century Cabaret. By HAROLD B. SEGAL. Columbia University Press, $30.00, £17.70.

Evocative but sadly unillustrated survey of cabarets in Paris, Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Barcelona, Cracow, Moscow, St Petersburg, and Zurich, showing how each reflected social, political, and cultural circumstances, and many showcased such influential talents as those of Max Reinhardt and Frank Wedekind.

Truth Betrayed. By W. J. WEST. Duckworth, £12.95.

The author is the researcher who found George Orwell's wartime scripts in the BBC's written archives. He uses the same source here for miscellaneous chapters on pre-War and wartime broadcasting, focusing on such figures as Guy Burgess and "Lord Haw-Haw", and showing how the Corporation's independence was breached by Government pressure, even then.

The Collected Stories of Angus Wilson. Secker & Warburg, £12.95.

A modestly priced compendium including all of *The Wrong Set, Such Darling Dodos,* and *A Bit off the Map*, plus one story previously uncollected. Although the contemporary bang-up-to-date gloss has now faded, the best stories here are a sharp reminder of Wilson's eye for social detail and his ear for insincerity. His very first story, "Raspberry Jam", is still one of his best.

John Dryden and His World. By JAMES ANDERSON WINN. Yale University Press, $29.95, £19.95.

Beware, normally, of "and his world" in titles, as of ".95" in prices. But this masterly and elegant volume is a mine of scholarship and judgment, with some 46 telling illustrations. It traces in absorbing detail Dryden's evolution from a Puritan background to a Catholic old age—no sinecure once James II had gone.

Elysian Fields: A Book of Memory. By V. S. YANOVSKY. Translated by ISABELLA YANOVSKY and the Author. Northern Illinois University Press, $39.00, £27.55.

Life in a Russian expatriate's Paris between the wars. What emerges from this exiled physician's and novelist's teeming memoir is how self-contained the various immigrant groups were. Orwell, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, Henry Miller might just as well not have been around; and Yanovsky assiduously avoided a fellow-passenger when sailing to New York in 1942. Her name was Simone Weil.

R.M.

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MEMOIR

My Friend Vicky

By George Mikes

I FIRST MET VICKY in a studio in Broadcasting House where we—who else?—were discoursing on English humour on the BBC. That was in the spring of 1953. I knew before meeting him what sort of a man to expect: I had seen his drawings about himself many times. There was always the minuscule Vicky, standing at the corner of his drawings, watching the peculiar scene in front of him with bemused incredulity. The tiny figure of the drawings was rather prettier than the live Vicky; but the real man, with his bald head, lively black eyes, and disarming smile was more interesting and engaging.

When the recording was over, we decided to have a cup of coffee (most emphatically not tea) together. He guided me to the Quality Inn round the corner where he was treated very much as a regular customer. "I should think so!" he remarked when I mentioned this, and he explained that it was his habit to get up at some ungodly hour, gather all the newspapers available in London, and then rush to the Inn and wait outside until the cafe opened at 7 a.m. About 8.30 he left for the Fleet Street offices of the *News Chronicle*.

We went on chatting. I asked him something in Hungarian, but Vicky failed to understand what I was talking about. "I thought you were Hungarian", I said. He explained that his father, Dezsö Weisz, was indeed a Hungarian citizen but had emigrated to Germany; Vicky was born in Berlin in April 1913 and his mother-tongue was German. He knew only a dozen words of Hungarian (which, later, he liked practising on me). While sitting there in the café he suddenly turned to me.

"Tell me! Having finished a piece of writing—whatever it may be—aren't you worried that you will never have an idea for another piece?"

I was astonished.

"No", I replied. "It's possible, of course, that in fact I shall never have another idea, but I'm not worried about it. I'm not the worrying type."

I did not attach too much significance to Vicky's question. I thought it was a conversational ploy. Later, when I got to know him better, I realised that it was the major problem of his life, a permanent nightmare. I feel sure that this fear of running dry of ideas—never a serious threat to one of the most productive and inventive cartoonists of our age—was at least a contributory factor in driving him to suicide (in London, on 24 February 1966).

Vicky and I became close friends. I often think of him, but after reading not too long ago Adrian Smith's excellent piece in ENCOUNTER on David Low ("Low & Lord Beaverbrook", December 1985), I have been thinking of Vicky even more often than usual. Smith called Vicky a genuinely great cartoonist, the only one among his contemporaries who belonged to David Low's class. Vicky's personal history—up to the time of our meeting—was the typical story of a Central European refugee. He started drawing political and sports cartoons for Berlin newspapers at an early age, and he published a number of anti-Nazi drawings, making fun of Hitler, before 1933.

When the Nazis came to power it was only Vicky's Hungarian passport that saved him from being sent to a concentration camp. In the very early days of Nazism even Hungarian public opinion was, to some extent, respected. This was a passing phase, but it lasted long enough for Vicky to travel to Hungary and, a few months later, to England. Here he called on Sir Gerald Barry, editor of the famous *News Chronicle*, and showed him his hundreds of cartoons satirising British political life. Barry recognised Vicky's wit, outstanding craftsmanship and originality, but found him "hopelessly Central European". He sent him away, with instructions to soak himself in English life, the classics of humorous literature, and "come back in six months. . . ."

Vicky did as he was told. He immersed himself in Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, Gilbert and Sullivan, and also in serious English poetry; he spent long days listening to debates in the House of Commons and studying *Hansard*. Six months later he returned to Gerald Barry, who looked at Vicky's more recent output, nodded approval, and engaged him as the chief political cartoonist of his paper.

ONE DAY Vicky complained to me that income tax and surtax were ruining him. He did not need much money; he lived a frugal life, but had quite a lot of family obligations. He found it difficult to manage; all his money went to the Inland Revenue.

"Who's your accountant?" I asked him.

"Accountant!", he shouted angrily. "You don't think I employ an accountant?" He looked at me in horror as if I had accused him of fraud or rape. I failed to understand it all.

"Why not?" I asked.

GEORGE MIKES, *who frequently contributed to* ENCOUNTER, *died at the age of 75 on 29 August 1987, in London. The MS of this memoir of his friend Vicky he gave us on the occasion of his last birthday celebration, in the Garrick Club. André Deutsch, who published some 30 of his works, brought out in October the last book, "The Riches of the Poor".*

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He explained. He had been accepted by Britain as a poor Continental refugee; he was infinitely grateful to this country, and he was absolutely determined to pay his taxes.

"Through your nose?" I asked.

"Through my nose", he agreed.

I told him that I knew this patriotic zeal of the convert, indeed I shared it. I, too, was willing to pay every penny I had to. But I did employ an accountant to make sure that I did not pay more. Or, indeed, less. This made him think a bit. He accepted that to employ a chartered accountant was not exactly tantamount to high treason, but otherwise he remained unconvinced. He would go on paying whatever the Inspector of Taxes asked him to pay.

Vicky's attitude to taxes was characteristic of his stubborn integrity. If an editor criticised the artistic side of his drawing, he was incredibly modest and accepted all criticism; but when an editor tried to change, or even "tone down", the political content of a drawing, he met with fierce and total resistance. Now, in connection with this paying of supertax, I met the same ferocity and I was still surprised. I knew many English friends who were ready—nay, willing—to give their lives for King and Country, but Vicky was the only person I ever met who was ready, in fact an eager volunteer, to pay more taxes than he really had to.

VICKY'S PATRIOTISM as well as mine was soon put to a severe test. He told me one day that he had the greatest difficulties with the editor of the *News Chronicle* (Gerald Barry's successor), who objected to his socialist views. He had decided, he told me, to draw fewer political cartoons. Was I prepared to write pieces of reportage for the paper, for him to illustrate? Of course, I was delighted.

One of our first assignments led us to that famous England-Hungary football match dubbed later, somewhat grandiloquently, "the Match of the Century". A day or two before the match Arthur Koestler asked me which side I was going to support. I found the question offensive. I was a British subject now, I replied, and of course I would support England. Arthur shook his head: "Patriotism is one thing, football-patriotism quite another. . . ."

I mentioned this conversation to Vicky, who was equally indignant. His British patriotism and loyalty were not to be questioned. But I am afraid Koestler, as usual, was right once again.

"The Match of the Century" was about 30 seconds old when the Hungarians shot their first goal. There was deadly silence in the huge Wembley arena—except for Vicky and I standing up, applauding our Magyars. Now, one does not applaud in the Press Box at all; and most certainly one does not applaud the enemy. We were nearly thrown out, but when someone pointed out that it was only two foreigners who were behaving in this outrageous manner, the others shrugged their shoulders and reverted to the match.

I still do not quite understand our behaviour. Was it that we wanted to identify ourselves with the winners, whichever side it was, to show what admirable fellows we were? Or was Koestler's simple formula about patriotism and some atavistic football-patriotism true?

OUR NEXT ASSIGNMENT was the Test Match. Neither of us had seen cricket before, but Vicky loathed the game with an astonishing fervour. I think his passion sprang from a headline in one of the London evening papers. During the crisis-ridden pre-War days he had seen in huge bold type: ENGLAND IN DANGER. He rushed to buy the paper, his heart pounding fast, to find that England was in the gravest danger of being "bowled out" and forced to "follow on". But England was in no danger this time, and we went to watch the Test Match. By the end of the fourth day it was almost certain that England would win the series and regain "the Ashes" from Australia. It was one of the finest hours of English cricket, and no one cared if we, two bloody outsiders, were derisive about the great national game next morning in the *Chronicle*. We did our level best.

The trouble was that I got genuinely interested in the game, and became something of a fan. So the next morning I returned to the Oval to watch the end of the match, which was supposed to be—and indeed proved to be—a sheer formality. Vicky had phoned me in the morning to discuss our piece in the *Chronicle*, and was told by my wife that I was not at home. He smelled a rat, and asked:

"Where is he?"

"As a matter of fact, he went back to the Oval to watch cricket."

Vicky was flabbergasted.

"But he didn't *have* to."

"No", my wife agreed. "He just went for the pleasure of it. . . ."

There was a moment's deadly silence at the other end of the line. Then Vicky exclaimed: "Traitor!", and banged the receiver down.

I NEVER lived this treachery down. Our collaboration did not last too long, anyway. The Editor refused to publish one of Vicky's more vitriolic cartoons attacking the Kenya settlers, and Vicky resigned from the *New Chronicle*. He had two jobs offered to him: by the *Mirror* and by the *Evening Standard*. He consulted three people about what to do. Gerald Barry was one, I was the other, and I forget who the third was. All three of us—remembering Lord Beaverbrook's wonderful relationship with David Low, and the perfect freedom Low had enjoyed—suggested the *Standard*. Vicky joined the *Mirror*. He was a Socialist, he said, and it was his duty to join a Leftish paper.

Soon after Vicky's arrival, Phil Zec, formerly a cartoonist but by then one of the moguls on the *Mirror*, took us out for lunch and asked us whether we would be prepared to continue our collaboration for the *Mirror*. I declined with thanks. Phil Zec asked me for my reasons. I told him that I could not write for this sort of mass-circulation paper, I did not appeal to its readers, and I would not last a fortnight. Then I added:

"Besides, nobody reads the *Mirror*."

Zec blew up. At the time the *Mirror* was at the height of its

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popularity. Its circulation was over four million, which meant probably about ten million readers a day. "You bloody intellectuals", Zec fumed. "Those ten million people are nothing for you!"

A few months later Vicky asked me if I remembered my quarrel with Zec. How could I forget? "Well", said Vicky, with a wry smile, "nobody reads the *Mirror*." He explained that he was doing a cartoon every week for the *New Statesman* (circulation 80,000) and one every day for the *Mirror* (circulation over four million). "Yet", he continued, "I keep meeting people who are commenting about my *New Statesman* cartoon but I've never met one single person who even mentioned a piece of mine in the *Mirror*."

When his stint at the *Mirror* was over (some five years later), he joined the *Standard*. His relationship with Lord Beaverbrook was as ideal as David Low's used to be. The more outraged Tories complained about Vicky's blood-boiling "Red propaganda" in the paper, the happier Beaverbrook seemed to feel.

His caricatures were always forceful and biting but, with the exception of the cases of John Foster Dulles and General Eisenhower, they were never malicious. These two appeared as frogs, hyenas, and in other unflattering forms. Churchill often appeared as Micawber, General de Gaulle as a totem pole, Anthony Eden as a zither-playing rabbit, Ernest Bevin as a street-urchin. The followers and cronies of his victims were always outraged, but often the victims themselves wrote to Vicky and asked him for the original drawings.[1] Vicky always gave them, and never accepted a penny.

Vicky's most famous creation was "Supermac". Harold Macmillan was represented in some sort of silly armour and with wings, like Superman, the American hero of cheap comics. "Supermac" radiated superb self-confidence, enormous vanity, and invincible power. The 1959 General Election was approaching, and many senior Tories were demanding that Lord Beaverbrook should silence Vicky, at least until the results were declared. Beaverbrook would not dream of such a thing; and he was right once again. Vicky was amazed, amused, and more than a little upset to learn that his ferocious cartoons in fact had helped the Tory cause! "Supermac" was taken at face value; the cartoon increased Macmillan's popularity; and Vicky contributed to the Conservative victory.

[1] An exhibition of Vicky's work—*Vicky: Cartoons by Victor Weisz 1913-1966*—is on show at the National Portrait Gallery in London until 6 March. A new biography, *Vicky*, by Russell Davies and Liz Ottaway, was published in December by Secker & Warburg (£9.95).

My penultimate meeting with Vicky was possibly the happiest of all. He had just married Inge, his fourth wife. She was a charming and very intelligent German girl, and Vicky was not only very much in love with her but obviously—perhaps for the first time in his life—very happy and carefree.

A few weeks after this meeting he rang me up and suggested lunch. "But it must be somewhere in the City", he told me. "I must be near the office." We met in a pub, near the *Evening Standard*. A worried, deeply depressed, little Vicky appeared. He explained once again that he could not leave the vicinity because he might want to replace his cartoon, published in the first edition, by another. We were having our soup when a newspaper-seller appeared, and the men at the next table bought a *Standard*. I do not remember exactly what the banner headline was, but it seemed to me just another blown-up and utterly uninteresting local affair.

Vicky put his spoon down. "I'm sorry", he said, "but I must go back to the office and do a piece on that! Please finish your lunch and leave the bill to me. . . ." Before I could reply he was gone. I failed to understand. He had an excellent cartoon in the first edition of the paper, and for the life of me I could not see the need to replace it. I bought a late edition of the paper. Vicky's original cartoon was not replaced.

In those days I often visited Dr Eustace Chesser, the psychologist, who lived just across the street from Vicky. We were planning to write a book together, and I was a frequent visitor in Eustace's house. It never occurred to me to drop in on Vicky; I never "drop in" on anyone. But on Wednesday the 23rd February, 1966, I felt an almost irresistible urge to go and see him. My finger was already on the bell when I changed my mind. I hate it so much if someone comes to see me unannounced that, at the last moment, I refused to inflict the same inconvenience on Vicky. Just as well. At that time Vicky was lying dead on his bed. He had finished his daily cartoon (on the Government's support for the USA in the Viet Nam War), and then he took an overdose of the sleeping pills of which he had an abundant supply all his life.

I feel sure that Vicky did not kill himself because of the British Government's acquiescence in America's South-east Asia intervention. Nobody commits suicide because of the state of public affairs. Many people think they do, but no one does. Vicky was not depressed because of Viet Nam, nor was he depressed because he had suffered some blow or another and was unhappy. He was depressed because he was depressed; he suffered from the terrible illness of depression. Indeed, he killed himself at the most joyful and happy time of his life. Cartoonists are often as forlorn and tragic figures as humorists.

Inge, his lovely and utterly happy new wife, committed suicide on the anniversary of Vicky's death.

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MUSIC

Are We Out of the Philistine Past?

By Michael Kennedy

IT WAS IN 1913, at a splendid gathering at Philip Sassoon's house in London, that Ralph Vaughan Williams took along a group of musicians to play the incidental music he had written to Maeterlinck's play *The Death of Tintagiles*, which was being privately performed. Afterwards he insisted (to his host's dismay) that the band should join him at the grand dinner-party instead of being banished to the servants' quarters for a less sumptuous meal.

This incident epitomises the common British attitude to professional musicians up to a few years ago—though I gather that it is by no means extinct. It is an attitude well documented and examined in *The Music Profession in Britain Since the Eighteenth Century* by Cyril Ehrlich, Professor of Economic and Social History at Queen's University, Belfast.[1] Professor Ehrlich cuts a lucid path through the mass of facts and figures he has assembled and only very rarely clogs his prose with indigestible statistics or economist's jargon.

The story he tells is sometimes very funny, often rather sad, and most of the time explains only too well why the European continent used to regard Britain as a land without music. It was not only that until Elgar came along we were short of really outstanding composers for about 200 years, but that nobody in the land regarded music as a serious occupation or pastime. So the book does help to explain why both Elgar and Benjamin Britten regarded the British public as basically philistine where music was concerned.

One of the chief troubles—and it runs through the book like a thread—is that Britain has never been all that keen on having foreign musicians here. One of the first people to suggest the foundation of a college of music was Daniel Defoe, the author of *Robinson Crusoe*. In 1728 he produced a "proposal to prevent the expensive importation of foreign musicians etc. by forming an Academy of our own"; it was to be attached to Christ's Hospital. It was a sensible plan but it got nowhere—Defoe (apparently very much like Sir Keith Joseph today) was worried that British performers never made an international reputation because economic circumstances forced them into teaching. Most of the London opera orchestras in the 1720s were Italians and Germans, and after 1750 the influx of foreigners only increased. There were not enough professionally-trained British musicians to challenge them for their jobs. Music outside London was run by amateurs. Norwich was in the lead for a time. Parishes around Norwich paid organists up to £25 a year (a considerable sum at the time). Incomes were supplemented by teaching, and

> "Trading, tuning and repairing instruments were common alternative or additional sources of income. James Hook (1746-1827), who was later to achieve wealth and eminence in London as an organist, teacher (making £600 a year from school pupils), and prolific composer of light music, began his career by thus piecing together a modest living. The physically handicapped son of a cutler who died when he was eleven, Hook was an infant prodigy taught mainly by the cathedral organist, and perhaps by Burney. At the age of 17 he was advertising lessons in guitar, harpsichord, violin, and flute, and a willingness to tune, copy, transpose, and compose music for voice or instruments. Within a year he had left for London, and Edward Beckwith, assistant organist at the cathedral, was attempting to attract his former pupils. Presumably the lucrative procedure of selling a 'practice' had not yet begun in Norwich."

Professor Ehrlich has succeeded in tracking down the beginning of the great Northern choral tradition. In Leeds in the 1770s there was a series of concerts which included eighteen consecutive weekly performances of *Messiah*. Babies, it was said, lisped "For unto us a child is born" in their cradles. But the foreign invaders penetrated as far as Leeds, too. In September 1779 Signora Rossi arrived from Vienna "to perform most surprising feats on the stiff rope, also capers and elevations with great dexterity, decency and elegance. She played on the violin on the rope in six different positions, quite new and agreeable, and a solo on the German flute. . . ."

THE FIRST outstanding home-grown musician to emerge with the dawn of the 19th century was George Smart—well named, it would appear. In his teens he played in the orchestra for Haydn's London concerts. He was also an organist and a piano-teacher and sang in the Italian Opera chorus. Putting all these talents to good use, before he was thirty he was moving in high society, with Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton and the Duke of Sussex. By then he had taken up conducting and on a visit to Dublin in 1811 he was knighted, at the age of 35. He went to Germany and met Weber (who later died in Smart's London house), and he went to Vienna to ask Beethoven about the correct tempi for his symphonies. Like Elgar's, Smart's father ran a music shop. Ironically, Smart became conductor of the Philharmonic Society of London at a time when one of its rules was that a tradesman was admitted *only* if he could assure the committee that he had *never* served

[1] *The Music Profession in Britain Since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History*. By CYRIL EHRLICH. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, £22.50.

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behind a counter. When the Athenaeum Club blackballed an application for membership from the conductor Michael Costa because he was a musician, it was pointed out that George Smart could not be cited as a precedent because he had been elected as a knight, not as a musician.

THIS KIND OF HYPOCRISY occurs again and again in Victorian times. The whole attitude to music was hypocritical, even though the employment of musicians increased rapidly because of the spread of commercial entertainments, including a large number of touring opera companies. One concert impresario put on 48 concerts in 48 cities in 48 days. This was possible because of the intricate and massive British railway network. At one time there were 142 special trains every Sunday in England and Wales to transport touring companies of musicians and actors. (So all those stories about "Crewe Station" must have been true after all.)

The other big employer of musicians was the Music-Hall—the most popular form of entertainment in the second half of the 19th century, says Professor Ehrlich, apart from drinking, fornication, and sport. On the more serious side, much was done to popularise orchestral concerts by the flamboyant Jullien, whose baton was handed to him on a silver salver.

Composers were helping employment, too, by writing for larger orchestras. Haydn's orchestra in the 1790s had 40 players. A century later Strauss and Wagner needed over 100, although it was rare for their demands to be fully met. (As late as the 1930s the Old Vic once did Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* with an orchestra of 18.) In Manchester the Hallé concerts, founded in 1858, went from strength to strength, and Bournemouth in 1893 started the country's first municipal orchestra under Dan Godfrey.

In the summer the orchestral players migrated to the seaside resorts, to play on the piers in the Isle of Man, Scarborough, Blackpool, Eastbourne, and other places. If this suggests a great thirst for music among British holidaymakers, Professor Ehrlich has a good tale from the bassoonist Archie Camden to set the record straight.

> "Along with other first-class instrumentalists, he would spend the summer months at Buxton or Eastbourne, earning a few pounds in a scratch band. It was their favourite pastime to play movements from Beethoven symphonies, attributing their composition, in turn, to individual members of the band, who would solemnly acknowledge the audience's applause. . . ."

This kind of public ignorance might not have been the norm if the aristocracy had taken more interest in music. After Prince Albert's death there was no counteraction to the firmly entrenched philistinism of Royalty and the upper classes generally. They did not care a hoot for music. Edward VII went to Covent Garden mainly to sleep, and he complained when Ethel Smyth's opera *The Wreckers* woke him up. Professor Ehrlich sums up the situation thus:

> "After Albert's death, as citizens of a liberal democracy were at liberty to observe, nothing could be expected from the court. 'Had the life of this prince been spared', wrote Ella in 1878, 'the arts in England would have had an advocate to plead successfully on behalf of their institutions.' The widow Queen's attitude towards musicians was noted by Clara Schumann, with some asperity, and later the court's artistic proclivities descended to the overt philistinism of George V. With few exceptions the nation's leaders followed suit: neither music nor musicians were taken seriously.
>
> In some areas the effect was direct and self-evident. Attempts to create a first-class national conservatory, for example, in which the Prince Consort had a vital and informed interest, were dissipated after his death. More generally the implications of royal and official indifferences were indirect and insidious. The lack of a sustained commitment to opera, in the age of Verdi and Wagner, was, as many commentators have pointed out, the most crippling weakness in British musical life."

All this in a nation where it was reckoned there were 400,000 pianos and a million pianists. Most professional musicians were piano teachers, many of them with phony letters after their names from bogus colleges of music. Here, again, class entered into it. Most of the teachers and pupils were middle-class women. For boys of "good family", music was forbidden territory; their moral health might be endangered by such close contact with women. J. A. Fuller Maitland, a future music critic of *The Times*, was told that he could sing or learn the violin, but it would not have been right for a boy to learn the piano. At that date you could buy a violin for £5, a cello for up to £27, an oboe for £6, and a trumpet for £5.

SO WHERE WERE the orchestral players in London trained? The Royal Academy of Music was founded in 1823, and Professor Ehrlich's account of its first 60 years makes grim reading.

Hardly any former Academy students were good enough to get into the London opera orchestras in the 1850s. This was scarcely surprising. The committee that ran the place mainly comprised aristocratic amateurs; there was no money, and they could not afford to pay the staff decently. The only good teacher, the harpist Nicholas Bochsa, was a foreigner, a forger, and a bigamist; and the first Principal, William Crotch, had to resign because he gave a girl pupil a chaste kiss after she had played rather well.

Ehrlich uses William Crotch to illustrate the environment in which a musician of brilliant promise (from the age of three) had to make his way in England. Exploited by his mother, he was assistant to the Cambridge professor of music at the age of 11, even though he had had no real training in either the art or technique of music:

> "His subsequent career was successful, within the narrow and parochial confines of English academic appointments, occasional concerts, and a small output of compositions for which even devotees can only find mild praise. This failure to fulfil early promise has been attributed by his hagiographer to 'the harsh musical environment in England' which apparently refers primarily to his

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countrymen's 'indifference to music from any mere Englishmen', although allowance is made for his lack of adequate professional instruction. The argument is too fragmentary to be convincing, and there are opposing views. Fétis, for example, considered that Crotch's reputation as 'the most learned of the English musicians' was 'no great compliment to English musical science', resting solely on 'an obscure work in which the facts are ill-classed, the views of art superficial, and of reasoning not a particle.' His name was 'not known beyond the limits of his native country', his career 'an instance of the little dependence that can be placed on precocity of talent. . . .'"

The only institution which turned out good musicians was the military school of music at Kneller Hall founded in 1857.

"An average of about seventy students, usually not below 15 years of age, were admitted each year. Few of them had any previous musical training, and we know from another source that some were very unpromising, because regiments were 'not as yet taking Kneller Hall seriously'. Yet the school was so efficient that approximately half returned to their regiments as bandsmen after two years' training. A smaller group, later to be categorised as 'students' in contrast to the boy 'pupils', were 'band sergeants training to be bandmasters'. Cheap tickets and train fares were awarded to diligent students, to encourage them to attend concerts and the opera: 900 were issued in one year, and many more individuals went at their own expense. 'The opportunity of hearing good music is not one of the least advantages gained by pupils of Kneller Hall', remarked the Committee: a civilised comment which it would be anachronistic to dismiss as a truism in 1865."

In the 1880s when the musical profession—most of it trained by private teachers—was becoming overcrowded, more colleges of music sprang up, including the Royal College of Music in London. After a shaky start the RCM established higher standards all round; but students who wanted intensive training still had to go abroad, to Leipzig or to Paris. The college performed two acts of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* in its early years and laid good foundations in other areas:

"The appointment of Ysaÿe and Joachim as examiners indicated a serious attempt to impose high standards. Competent teachers were more elusive, primarily because of inadequate salaries, but also because, as others had discovered, there were peculiar occupational hazards attached to the education of young ladies. In 1893 the principal violin teacher was found demonstrating his affection for a student and sacked with a promptitude which must set a record for such encounters. Windows were inserted into the doors of teaching rooms, and a teacher installed whose Spanish reserve was deemed more appropriate than the passion of his English predecessor. Since Fernandez Arbos was a pupil of Vieuxtemps and Joachim, standards of violin-playing at the College continued to rise. . . ."

What sort of life awaited the musician who played in a theatre orchestra in the 1880s?

A player in an opera orchestra could earn from £3 to £6 for six or seven performances including rehearsals, and a guinea for a similar number of concerts or oratorio performances. In the metropolitan theatres players earned 25 to 36 shillings a week for performing incidental music. Music-hall players rarely earned more than 30 shillings a week. It was sweated labour, too, in appalling conditions which were a breeding-ground for tuberculosis. Theatre pits were either draughty or too hot, the back-stage facilities were disgusting, meals were irregular, and hours very unsocial.

Professor Ehrlich remarks that Sidney and Beatrice Webb and other social reformers got very worked up about clothing-workers and chain-makers—but never gave musicians so much as a passing thought. So it was not surprising that in 1893, in Manchester, a union was formed and that within a year its membership had doubled. Its general secretary, Joe Williams (who eventually became chairman of the Trades Union Congress) was a fighter and was only interested in his members' pay and conditions, whereas the rather more genteel Incorporated Society of Musicians, also founded in Manchester, was mainly concerned with raising the status of the profession and getting musicians recognised as on a par with lawyers and doctors. This aspiration was torpedoed by one commentator who said that the public was much exercised about the qualifications of its doctors and lawyers, but did not give a rap about musicians—which was true.

The union met fierce opposition, especially when strikes were called. Dockers and match-girls did this sort of thing but not *musicians*, who were suddenly endowed with a respectability hitherto denied to them. But nobody went on strike on behalf of women musicians, who had a long fight to show they could play just as well as men. (One writer said they *could* not—because a physiologist had assured him that there was a muscle "entirely absent from the female arm".) Sir Henry Wood was the first conductor to admit women into an orchestra. Beecham had a prejudice against women orchestral players all his life. And look what happened recently when Herbert von Karajan appointed a woman as first clarinet of the Berlin Philharmonic! . . .

Another recurrent theme of Professor Ehrlich's is the periodic outbreak of xenophobia when times are bad, even though British impresarios lamentably failed to promote native talent (the violinist Albert Sammons being a case in point). During the 1914-18 War, various musicians' union branches wanted a permanent ban on foreigners (of every description and for all time), but this was resisted. Many foreign musicians living in Britain in 1914 were arbitrarily interned or deported; but Professor Ehrlich errs in writing that Adolph Brodsky (the Russian Principal of the Royal Manchester College of Music from 1895 to 1929) was one of them. Brodsky happened to be in Vienna in August 1914,

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and he was kept there by the Germans. It took the US Ambassador nine months of diplomacy to have him sent back to England.[2] Professor Ehrlich also notes a later "reluctance to profit from Hitler's gifts":

> "A committee including Michael Tippett later deplored the failure 'to secure the services of the few great Continental teachers who found in this country temporary refuge from political persecution. Several would have stayed but for the general indifference shown to their unique qualifications, and because of the active opposition organised by a number of leading musicians in the teaching profession.' An exception was Max Rostal, formerly assistant to Flesch and professor at the Berlin Hochschule, who was allowed to teach at the Guildhall School of Music. His influence on the next generation of string players was later widely acknowledged; among his pupils were three members of the Amadeus Quartet."

In the 1920s we read of some musicians equalling the average salary of a doctor (about £720 a year). Very few, even star soloists and conductors, earned more than £1,000 a year, and nobody remotely approached the dance-band leader Ambrose with his reputed £10,000. After 1918 came a good time for musicians because of the silent cinema. There would have been disastrous unemployment in 1931 with the advent of "talkies"—but for two new developments: the vogue of the dance-band and the enormous patronage of music by the BBC.

After 1945, with the growth of state subsidies and the vast proliferation of musical activities, the position of the profession becomes much more complicated and Professor Ehrlich wisely does not go into detail. But, referring to the 1980s he makes some pertinent comments:

> "Most British musicians were still primarily dependent upon the home market, which gave few indications that it could absorb such profusion. Only a small proportion of the population were regular concert- or opera-goers; and no form of live professional music-making rated high among the interests of an increasingly prosperous and leisured society. The typical musician, unless he could find a regular, pensioned job, still pieced together a modest and precarious income. If his working and living conditions were better than those of his predecessors, this tended to reflect changes in society, rather than in his professional status. Like the rest of Western mankind, he no longer succumbed to tuberculosis which . . . had accounted for 40 per cent of musicians' deaths in 1912. In sickness, unemployment, and old age, he enjoyed the minimum benefits of the welfare state, supplemented, perhaps, by the Royal Society of Musicians, or Musicians' Benevolent Fund. Few occupations offered fewer material rewards to skill and hard work, yet nothing could stem the tide of aspirants. . . ."

NOT TOO ROSY A PICTURE, in spite of all the progress. And one may well wonder, even noting the astonishing numbers of concerts throughout the land, whether the British public yet regards music with the seriousness one might expect.

The minority is passionately interested, the majority still basically philistine. Music is still not regarded as fundamental to our way of life, as is, for instance, the public library. It is still an "extra" activity in schools. We can still let the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society slide to the brink of extinction as a result of political wrangling, and contemplate the members of the orchestra taking to the streets to try to preserve their jobs. We may smile smugly as we read about "the philistine past", but we do not have all that much to smile about.

[2] The book has a few other slips of this kind, and rather too many misspellings of names for an Oxford imprint.

Ruth

Finding you in your kitchen caught in still
Warm light, head held uneasily alert,
Hair smudged with wild flowers on the window-sill,
Face shadowed, drawn, expecting to be hurt,

I hesitate—for once silence seems better—
And lose, like anger slipping from the hand,
The din of closing rank and lawyer's letter,
Aware of what I see, not where I stand.

Faltering, I am able to discover,
While you catch breath balancing brittle nerves
Precariously to drain beside the sink,
No estranged wife, no disaffected lover,
No woman wanting more than she deserves,
No cause, no words to tell me what to think.

Joseph Treasure

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FILM

Lermontov, or A Plot Exposed

By Walter Laqueur

MIKHAIL LERMONTOV, the *Wunderkind* of Russian literature, was killed at the age of 27 in a duel. To this day he and Pushkin are the most beloved of all Russian poets. On several occasions in the USSR, I visited the place where he was killed in the foothills of the Caucasus, near the city of Pyatigorsk. There were always hundreds of visitors, some of them young poets, reciting his verse (or, very often, their own). I imagine the number of poets in Russia, good and bad, must be greater than in any other country. There were school-children and elderly people milling around the obelisque commemorating Lermontov.

He was a dashing, romantic hero, a young society lion chasing women and making a nuisance of himself at court—an unlikely figure to cause a major political scandal some 160 years after his tragic death. Yet such has been the strange fate of this immensely gifted poet; and the affair sheds some light on the cross-currents of *glasnost* in the Soviet Union today.

The story begins a few years ago when Nikolai Burlyayev, a well-known Soviet actor, decided to make a film about Lermontov's life and death. Burlyayev had starred at the age of 16 in a fine Soviet film called *Ivan's Childhood* (Andrei Tarkovsky's first major production). It was an excellent work and, like some other actors, Burlyayev thought he would be even more successful as a major producer. This proved to be a mistake: to his peers, and to critics as well as the general public, *Lermontov* was a major flop. There was one significant critical exception: Vadim Kozhinov wrote an enthusiastic review in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, much to the embarrassment of the editors, who counterbalanced it by a second, negative, review in the same issue. Kozhinov is not a film critic but a kind of right-wing eccentric, possibly the Russian equivalent of d'Annunzio or Charles Maurras.

He first attracted notoriety under Khrushchev when he appeared in the Writers Union building clad in the traditional garb of a Russian *muzhik* (reddish calico shirt and all), much to the amusement of his fellow writers. The idea was not altogether novel; Alexander Herzen in his autobiography tells the story of Khomyakov, the early Slavophile, who paraded the streets of St Petersburg in the 1840s in what he thought was the attire of a Russian peasant—which most passers-by took for Persian national dress. Since then Kozhinov has become one of the most influential voices of the chauvinist camp, holding high the banner of certain pre-Revolutionary traditions, bitterly criticising non-Russians, "the decadent West", vulgar "mass culture", etc., etc.

The *Lermontov* flop happened two years ago, and the story would normally have ended here. Bad films are produced in every country, and such failures have befallen even the greatest talents in cinema history. But Burlyayev is an obstinate man; he did not accept the verdict, but "went to the Russian people"—or, to be precise, to certain sections of the people—"over the heads" of both the Moscow Establishment and the cinema-goers. He claimed that he had produced not only a masterpiece, a milestone in the state of the art, but also a film with a clear message which certain sinister forces had tried to suppress—the same forces (he said) which had "killed Lermontov", and which in our own day were out to destroy Russian culture.

Burlyayev's campaign was quite remarkable. *Lermontov* has been regularly shown at the meetings of *Pamyat*—the society for the preservation of cultural monuments which has attracted much attention in recent months in the Soviet Union and abroad because of its extreme, eccentric, semi-fascist views. Letters were received in the editorial offices of those Moscow newspapers which had published hostile reviews; leading writers signed appeals on behalf of *Lermontov*; even Young Communist League militants rallied around him.

At this stage the case of the unsuccessful movie became something of a political issue. For on one point Burlyayev was undoubtedly right. His film definitely had a message: the Motherland was in danger; foreigners were systematically subverting Russia; the whole outside world was ganging up against Mother Russia; the "murder" of Lermontov had been a Judaeo-Masonic plot. Unbeknownst to almost everyone, a battle to the death was going on between the forces of light and the powers of darkness. . . .

While Burlyayev may not believe in God, he certainly fears the Devil, who figures prominently in his speeches and in the apocalyptic appeals of his followers. They may or may not care about Lermontov's verse, but they do seem to believe that some form of Armageddon is near. Burlyayev said in an interview with a provincial Russian newspaper: "What happens now with regard to my film is comparable to the plot against Lermontov. . . ."

WHAT PLOT? According to the movie version, Lermontov was killed by a man named Martynov, played by an actor with pronounced un-Russian features and, worse yet, with the patronym "Solomonovitch". This was frequently stressed, so as to make clear even to the most dim-witted cinema-goer the unsavoury racial origin of Lermontov's assassin. "They" had killed Pushkin (also in a duel) ten years earlier, and now

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"the forces of evil" were systematically destroying "all that was dear to the Russian people", its cultural heritage, its self-esteem, its very existence. The forces of evil had even introduced vodka to Russia; not just for the sake of profit but to brutalise the people, to sap their morale and their spiritual strength.

One of Russia's leading writers, Vasily Belov, who had come out in favour of *Lermontov*, declared in his most recent novel that even President Kennedy had been an active participant in the conspiracy to keep the Russian people in a state of drunkenness. ("To defeat a people you don't need *Pershings*. . . .") In the film Lermontov appears as a warning voice, a prophetic patriot calling on his contemporaries for a great national revival—to oust the hated foreigners, all of whom have only one aim: the evil ruin of the Russian people.

IF THIS MESSAGE was as yet thinly veiled in the movie, there was no such restraint in the letters written by Burlyayev's admirers to the newspapers which had been critical of *Lermontov*. It was *Pamyat* doctrine pure and simple.

But the real Lermontov, in contrast to the movie's hero, had not been the victim of a plot. The true details of Lermontov's life and his poetry are common knowledge among educated Russians. (He had, in fact, anticipated his own fate in his only long novel, *A Hero of Our Time*: the "hero" was killed in a duel.) Lermontov was arrogant and irritable, had a sharp tongue, and was given to mercilessly ridiculing, in word and caricature, friends, foes, and innocent bystanders alike. He was quarrelsome; the duel in which he lost his life was not the first he had fought.

Major Martynov, who shot and killed him, was a former Army officer—according to contemporary accounts, a pompous fool who moved about in the dress of a Caucasian native, equipped with an enormous dagger which had provoked Lermontov's mockery. He was no stranger to Lermontov; they had served together in officers' training school, and Lermontov had been friendly with his sister. This did not, however, prevent Lermontov from ridiculing him in front of the Pyatigorsk ladies, and it was this that led to the fatal confrontation. There was still a chance that the duellists might merely go through the motions; but Lermontov spoiled this when he loudly announced, "I won't bother to aim at this fool . . . ", which made the aggrieved Martynov even more angry.

What of Martynov's "foreign origin"? Russians do sometimes have strange first names. Thus, the hero in a novel by Vasily Belov, the popular writer who identified himself with the spiritual message of *Lermontov*, is a Russian peasant named "Ivan Afrikanovitch" (even though neither he nor his father ever went more than a few miles outside their native village). Martynov hailed from a family of Moscow landowners; his father was indeed named Solomon, but he was no more a Jew than Lermontov. In fact, the Russian roots of the Martynovs were more ancient than the Lermontovs'. Lermontov's ancestors, the Learmonts, were of Scottish origin, and had helped King Malcolm to defeat the historical Macbeth. Nor was Martynov a Mason (whereas Pushkin, and many of the members of the Russian nationalist party in the 19th century, had belonged to a Masonic lodge). In short, the film had falsified history, with a very specific aim.

Lermontov was a Russian patriot; he wrote an angry poem after Pushkin's death ("Revenge, Sire, Revenge"), in which he denounced the many foreigners—mainly Germans—in high places to whom Russian traditions and culture meant little or nothing. He also referred from time to time to the conceit and the corruption of Western Europe. But he was not a chauvinist. Every Russian schoolchild is taught the poem he wrote when he was exiled from the capital to the Caucasus. It begins: "Farewell, unwashed Russia, land of masters, land of slaves, and your blue uniforms [the gendarmes] and your submissive hordes. . . ." True, some of the letter-writers supporting *Lermontov* allege that this poem must be a forgery; the national hero could not possibly have written such unpatriotic verse. But there were, after all, other poems in the same discomfiting vein: while his love for his motherland was "boundless", Lermontov wrote, he could feel no enthusiasm for barbarism and could not value fame bought by blood, nor could he cherish sacred traditions rooted in a dark past. The trouble with Russia was (as he wrote to a friend) that some people were suffering acutely, but an immense number suffered without even realising it. He was "a bard of freedom", but of a freedom that had nothing in common with the xenophobia of some latter-day patriots.

Was there a political plot against Lermontov? No more than there was a cabal against Schiller (as some madmen argued under Hitler) or a conspiracy against Mozart. Wild

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claims of this kind are not entirely unknown in European and even American history; they are not particularly disturbing if limited to a small paranoid minority. But conspiracy theories with a clear political message, such as those which emerge publicly in the Lermontov film, have become quite fashionable in the Soviet Union of late, and this leads to some fascinating questions.

How can one explain the readiness of a not insignificant number of Russians to accept notions which are manifestly absurd? Alexander Herzen noted more than a century ago that "the stifling emptiness and dumbness of Russian life, curiously combined with its vitality and rumbustious character, provoke all sorts of crackpot outbursts in our midst. . . ." This is as true now as it was in the last century.

The xenophobia is rooted, at least in part, in the traditional resentment of the small town against Moscow, and also in populistic anti-intellectualism. Among those most vociferous in this camp are writers and artists who have not quite succeeded, and who blame the critics—frequently concentrated in the capital (and sometimes of "cosmopolitan" origin)—for their personal misfortune, which they equate with the ruin of Russia and the Russian people. For example, the main figure in these circles in Akademgorod (the Siberian scientific centre) is a man named Kazantsev; his technological laboratory failed and was abolished, whereupon Kazantsev put the blame on a plot by "Masons and Zionists" and became something of a political prophet.

The story of Valeri Emelyanov, a *Pamyat* leader in Moscow, is even more bizarre. He was a teacher at the Institute for Foreign Languages who killed his wife, dismembered her, and stored the parts of the body for several days in his apartment. He told the police interrogators that "Zionists and terrorists" were to blame. He was excluded from Communist Party membership and given psychiatric treatment. But within a few years he was back in public life in the capital, addressing meetings and warning audiences against satanic conspiracies. . . .

LUNATICS AND LUNATIC FRINGES can be found in every country at almost all times. How much political importance should be accorded to such "crackpot outbursts"?

The reaction of the Soviet media is of interest. Until a few months ago they ignored the whole affair; but more recently daily attention has been given to such doctrines and activities. This would not have occurred if it were just a matter of a few disturbed individuals. It may well be not a sudden outburst. The views expressed in *Lermontov* and at the meetings of *Pamyat* are certainly not new: their 19th-century origins are known to students of European fascism. But until recently such views could be expressed only implicitly, and in Aesopian language. Under *glasnost* such reticence is no longer necessary. It is even possible to answer back. Although *Pravda* and *Izvestia* condemned *Lermontov, Rechnoi Transport* (*River Transport*), not normally a journal preoccupied with Russian literature, or *Young Communist of the Polar Region* may still regard it as the greatest thing that has happened to Soviet cinema in years.

It may not be a mass movement, but there are young people among its members. Despite the relatively small number of militants, the movement against the *inorodtsy* (aliens) seems to have a wider periphery among the "fellow-travellers" of the Right, who do not accept the higher lunacies of *Pamyat* doctrine but believe that some of the basic ideas are good and timely.

The Soviet Union is passing through a period of complex ideological ferment. Lip-service is paid to Marxism-Leninism, but many need some headier ideological fare to sustain them. There is something like an ideological vacuum, and it is in this context that ideas such as those in *Lermontov* make their appearance. In recent years, books (such as those written by the best-selling author Valentin Pikul) have been published which could have appeared without any difficulty before 1917 but for the fact that then they would have been derided by the pre-War liberal Russian intelligentsia.

All this creates problems for the Soviet leadership. For many years the "*Lermontov* message" about the all-pervasive conspiracies against the Russian people has been quietly tolerated—provided that it was not too blatantly racialist. Now, under *glasnost*, much that was previously suppressed and hidden has come out into the open, taking advantage of the relaxation of censorship. It will be fascinating to watch the reaction of the Moscow authorities. So far, some Party members have been given a warning, or even been excluded for "activities unbecoming to a Communist". In the longer run, more drastic measures may well have to be applied. A ban on the fantasies of the extreme Right might well be combined with clamping down on the "excesses" of the immoderate Left.

But the ideas underlying *Lermontov* seem to be deeply rooted; and we certainly have not heard the last of those who preach them.

Borges

Before the Ganges flows into the night,
  Before the knife rusts, the dream lose
Its crescent shape, before the tiger runs
  For cover in your pages, Borges, I must
Write the poem. Insomnia brings lucidity,
  And a borrowed voice sets the true one
Free: lead me who am no more than De Quincey's
  Malay, a speechless shadow in a world
Of sound, to the labyrinth of the earthly
  Library, perfect me in your work.

Arvind Krishna Mehrotra

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THEATRE

Harwood, Ayckbourn, Aphra Benn

Death on Stage

By Edward Pearce

REPUTATION is a dangerous thing. Albert Finney is a famous actor with film provenance. Such are the earnings of that world that any venture into theatre looks like a triumphant progress, condescending in the Jane Austen sense of generously stepping down to be easy with lesser folk. Thus when Jack Lemmon potters affectionately but without anguish through the part of O'Neill's James Tyrone, it is pretty good of him to bother even though he didn't do it very well.

The same problem attaches to Albert Finney's presence in *J. J. Farr* (Phoenix Theatre). He dominates the stage. He has presence and charisma. But then L. Ron Hubbard had charisma, and the truth has to be told—Finney is a terrible actor. His style has much in common with Richard Burton. It has authority, the voice booms, but whatever intelligence may be there simply does not engage. We are given a Jesuit turned atheist turned rehashed believer, who has gone through a Middle Eastern experience of kidnap and long incarceration, and been witness to death. Finney depicts him in a performance which is the theatrical equivalent of Joe Bugner staying on his feet for twelve rounds. Like our treasured, over-the-hill, no-hoper heavyweight, Finney is blondly good-looking in a fleshy way; he is statuesque. He moves like Bugner as well. A more arthritic, uncomprehending performance will not lightly be found in a twelvemonth.

It would help if Finney actually remembered the lines, not that there is anything in Ronald Harwood's play much worth remembering. He is set against Bob Peck, a bundle of sparking neurons, dancing up and down inside his part to make something of it and to communicate energy and rage. Admittedly Farr, the Finney character, is meant to be world-weary and emotionally exhausted, but this actor gives an impression of collapsing into the arms of the part.

Yet without Finney's name would *J. J. Farr* even be staged? It is too earnest for the increasingly feeble-minded West End, which delights in selling 50-year-old entertainments to American tourists on their way back from Windsor and the Cotswolds, who want something equally quaint. On the other hand, it has no compelling merits with which to offset philistine mistrust.

This is one of those coy little plays about religious doubt where faith is tossed a few good lines—in this case a punchline dripping in corn oil and artifice. An unbeliever ex-priest caught in the jails of Abu Nidal is confronted with dying Father McGee, who asks for absolution. "Once a priest always a priest", says the dying man. Farr puts on the cope, says the words, and comes back to his cell—and later to retreat in England—traumatised, reconverted, and mightily impressed. For the life of me I can't see why.

His antagonist, Lowrie (Bob Peck), is correspondingly enraged when told what has happened, and nearly breaks up the convalescent home for clerical doubters in which both have taken refuge. The setting is appropriate for either Agatha Christie or Thomas Love Peacock: who is going to be murdered? who will next say something discursively amusing? As a device for boring theological debate, it is appropriately dull and inanimate. As for the crisis, told us at second hand in the tedious classical fashion, it is asked to carry more weight than it will bear. A real-life unbelieving ex-priest would surely have gone through the old religious motions simply as a kindness and courtesy to a believer for whom they mattered. As it is, we have Farr in England shouting out in trance-like semi-consciousness the words and dialogue of the episode, and offering himself restored to faith. There is a struggle of almost physical rage between Farr and his atheistical disciple, Lowrie, outraged at this backsliding. When it is over, Lowrie attempts suicide and comes back to consciousness in the same trance, repeating the same words and intimating the same conversion as Farr. As a curtain it has the aplomb of a whoopee cushion.

SWEET STUFF for the faithful, it would go down a bundle in County Cork and might have been a hit here in the days when they were translating Claudel and Bernanos, but in spite of a volume of religio-psychological wadding tossed about to give Mr Harwood spiritual accreditation, this uninteresting, incredible, and rather somnolent piece echoes the complacent religiose tone of another age. It doesn't convince, it holds attention only fitfully through the minor, often amusing characters (notably Hugh Paddick as a camp old chaplain to foreign royalty). Above all, it wastes Ronald Harwood's talent (demonstrated well enough in *The Dresser*), which is for humour and self-derision. The pinnacles of religious speculation are short of oxygen, which may account for Albert Finney acting in slow motion. If Mr Harwood will come back to lower things he will be far more at home and we shall all want to join him. As it is, he has provided an apt vehicle for Albert Finney, a sealed lead coffin.

ALAN AYCKBOURN, by contrast, is interested *only* in the low. Somewhat disengenuously, posters for *A Small Family Business* (National Theatre, Olivier) depict a lady in high boots and net tights, carrying a whip. The part-

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time tarting of one member of the Ayres family, Anita, is the least of it. By depicting a family business moving in two-and-three-quarter hours from selling furniture to ancillary membership of the Mafia and wholesaling cocaine, Ayckbourn imposes a heavier and yet potentially more improbable plot than ever before.

I am not quite sure whether Mr Ayckbourn is embittered at the corruption of the human race or carried away by the mechanics of his own invention, but as an attack on yuppies *A Small Family Business* beats into a pulp that primitive piece of foul-mouthed fashionability, *Serious Money*, which has been the fey rage in London. Ayckbourn shows us the implosion of an honest man, Jack McCracken (Stephen Moore), into the bottomless corruption of his in-laws for whom larceny is a finger-end instinct. As plot it is heavily unlikely; as characters Ayckbourn's people are fearful. They have the marks of hatred on them. Obsessive, anorexic, dog-loving Harriet; greedy, food-connoisseuring Desmond; and possession-wise, fat, complaisantly cuckolded Cliff, a business executive with the ethics of a Maltese pimp—they are transcendentally horrible people.

Every previous excursion by the author into human fallibility looks like a trip round the bay compared to this voyage of disabuse. The irony is that Ayckbourn, who stresses his commonsense artisanship and refuses all the moral pretensions in which Ronald Harwood doggy-paddles, has written a sort of moral pantomime with good and bad clearly defined, and bad as clearly triumphing. Honest Jack concludes the deal which will make him a cocaine baron by putting on a double-breasted striped suit jacket, kissing his brother on both cheeks *à la Siciliana*, and saying: "This business must be kept in the Family." All extremely funny in its way, except that in an upper room of the four-part set his daughter Sammy (a particularly fine performance by Theresa Boden) is sitting ashen-white and injecting herself. There is simply too much cargo for this sprightly little boat to carry. She doesn't sink, but the list is perceptible.

The sheer brilliance of Ayckbourn's craft, which carries the first half at a magnificent dazzling zip that has one calling for more, will keep the boat above water. But what really works are the characters. As long as they are unfolding and giving the piece the energy of their unwinding identity, we have enormous pace and fierce compulsion. However, the action of the plot demands a resolution too extravagant. Outside of overt thrillers, death on stage is usually a sign of desperation. Ayckbourn, more honest than many writers, tells us that sometimes he wants to be rid of a character and isn't sure how to do it. The disposal of Benedict Hough (Clive Francis's gloriously creepish private detective) by banging his head against the bath may seem a touch extreme.

At about this time, plot (formal whale-boned figure-contorting old-style plot) takes over from character; and we all lose by it. Mr Ayckbourn will always look best in a liberty gown. Normally, relatively little happens in an Ayckbourn play: a quarrel certainly, a little fumbled adultery, much snubbing and point-scoring. But such is the delicacy of the participating characters, they get the main theme back out of its development and variations into the comfortable home key with a degree of finesse in which a thrown tea-tray is downright Wagnerian. By contrast, the characters of *A Small Family Business* are monsters, and accordingly create situations which are heavy metal for the sitting-room. Jack joins the Mafia at the end with the sort of resignation with which in earlier works he might have joined the Lions Club.

The play actually suffers from the author's skills. His little boast is that if a cup of tea has to be got from one side of the stage to the other, he can usually manage it. On this occasion he manages Samantha's tragedy of self-destruction, and makes it dreadfully real in circumstances where there is no room for it. To be bearable, these grotesques must be masques and humours. Intolerably and hurtfully, Samantha turns out real, with veins to take needles.

The Missing Hyphen

WHERE HAVE ALL *the hyphens gone? For some reason they're apparently being phased out just when they are needed most. The result is some pretty silly images I don't even want to think about, like "processed baby food manufacturers".*

A news story referred to "a black art collector". Is the collector black? Or does he collect art by black artists? Perhaps both. A story on the Navy's possible future methods for fighting a war cited the role of "small aircraft carriers". Was the new Navy plan for smaller carriers or smaller planes? A food story mentioned "a French cooking teacher".

LOOKING AT THE **lack of hyphens, I think the aim often seems to be to condense for speed. We are in the land of fast food operators. It's ironic that, at the same time, there seems to be a tendency to bog down language with unneeded words: "true facts", "past history", "very unique", "old cliché", "new innovations", "consensus of opinion".**

But to get back to the missing hyphens. "Used car buyer" (I think many have felt that way); "bare subsistence farmer" (who could probably use a pair of duck cloth pants); "walking shoe industry" and "rare documents dealer". There's "a heavy smoking man", "a light truck driver", whom I would rather avoid, preferring to spend my time instead with a civil rights worker.

Paul Freedman
in the LOS ANGELES TIMES

THE ROVER (Royal Shakespeare Company at the Mermaid) is simple if slightly over-length fun. Too much has inevitably been made of this Restoration play's female authorship. My impression of Aphra Behn is that, in the words of the Geordie song:

Wey, Ah said to Wor Nan,
Thoo's as good as a man.

Not at all a feminist conclusion. Mrs Behn gives the impression of being a rather rough lady, without hang-ups and with none of the epicene touches of Congreve. She is at the Ray Cooney end of the Restoration market (nothing wrong with

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that), but inclined to underline the sexier bits in triplicate.

The circumscribed talents of Jeremy Irons, a profile actor good at jumping over things, were given their optimum casting as Willmore, the Rover of the title—a sexual sprinter with the sensibilities of an iron bollard. There are opportunities for Stephanie Beacham to over-act to her heart's content as the courtesan Angellica Bianca. With athletic features and eyes flashing like a hyperactive road-block, Miss Beacham in twenty years time will be the Lady Bracknell of her generation. But the beautiful Imogen Stubbs as sharp, convent-defying Helena steals the female lead. Hugh Quarshi is a graceful Colonel Belville, and David Troughton does what he can with the tiresome transvestite business involving Blunt. It is not clear how much of this rather dreary joke (in a much-fingered script) derives from Mrs Behn (Lord, should we be calling her Ms Behn?) and how much from John Barton, the adapter/director, but men in lacy drawers are *ennuyant*! The lineaments of contemporary half-witted TV situation-comedy are gloomily apparent.

That said, I wouldn't want to put visitors off *The Rover*. It *is* fun, this tale of three girls in a Spanish colony in search of visiting British talent and of young Englishmen abroad behaving like a football excursion in the good old days of beer and sex. It is not (in the way of Farquhar or Vanbrugh) a witty play; but it is brisk, proficient farce—and its author, no rebel against the *Zeitgeist*, is a working playwright in the style (and quality), of Shadwell, and every bit as good as a man.

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He writes: "In the writing of this article, I gratefully acknowledge the staff of the Museum Requien at Avignon, especially the help, interest and information provided by M. Pierre Moulet, and am also indebted to M. Lucien Gerin, of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, l'Harmas, Sérignan."

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LANGUAGE

Verbal Wrist-Watches

Anachronisms in Historical Dramas—By BERNARD RICHARDS

FILM DIRECTORS shooting historical epics have a recurrent nightmare: that during a première a Roman centurion, or an Elizabethan sea-dog, or a Regency buck will loom on to the screen with a wrist-watch prominently in view. It seems to be a law that —even with thousands of centurions, sea-dogs, and bucks in shot—eagle-eyed members of the audience will spot the offending object, and feel the whole elaborate and laboriously constructed edifice of authenticity collapsing about their ears. Tyre tracks in *El Cid* and vaccination marks in *Spartacus*: the legends pass down over the decades.

Authenticity is a relentless will o' the wisp, always in view, but finally elusive. Somewhere in the audience there will be an expert with an unerring eye for regimental badges, railway rolling-stock, guns, swords, agricultural implements, vehicle registration numbers, costume, the rigging of galleons, and a host of treacherous bric-à-brac. Over the years correspondents to *Radio Times* have chronicled the anachronistic howlers of costume dramas, and the sheer reconditeness of their knowledge is breath-taking.

My favourite came from a viewer who noticed the wrong sort of dove as background to the progress of an Anthony Trollope novel. I was about to put pen to paper myself when I noticed that Lady Elizabeth Butler's painting of the charge of the Scots Greys at Waterloo (*Scotland for Ever!*) was in the background for Robert Bolt's film about Lady Caroline Lamb—a thorough absurdity when one considers that it was painted in 1881, and in any case is in a dashing, academic style (influenced by Gérôme, Vernet, and Alphonse de Neuville) that would have been quite impossible in 1815. The much-vaunted faithfulness and accuracy of the film version of E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View* was severely qualified for me when the Giotto fresco of St Francis in Santa Croce was shown in its state of modern restoration rather than with the over-paintings that would have been on show at the turn of the century.

Even vegetation poses a problem: I once saw rhododendrons (17th century) in a *Robin Hood* (supposedly 13th century) film; and in Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons* Henry VIII refers to a magnolia at Hampton Court—and yet the plant was named after the 17th-century botanist Pierre Magnol; there is no record of it in England before the 18th century.

Instances of this kind are invariably regarded by everyone concerned as nothing other than mistakes which damage the completeness of the illusion, and in an ideal world would have been avoided. Historical advisers are taken on to try to ensure that the costumes, the guns, the swords, and the rigging on the galleons are correct for the period.

Our view of history, which began to emerge in its present form round about the time of Walter Scott, recognises that concrete details of life in the past help to establish the uniqueness of particular periods in history, and that it is a desirable aim to achieve accurate reconstructions. The Pre-Raphaelite painters attempted authenticity on an heroic scale, and Holman Hunt got himself involved in a cut-and-thrust debate over the sword-hilts in his *Valentine Rescuing Sylvia from Proteus*. Archaeological zeal was brought to the evocations of the past, and the movie-makers inherited the quest for high standards from Victorian painting and Victorian stage-design. There is a direct line of descent from John Martin and Alma Tadema to Cecil B. deMille. We no longer have the blithe insouciance about timepieces enjoyed by Shakespeare when he makes a clock strike in *Julius Caesar*.

IN ONE IMPORTANT AREA of revival of the past, however, film-makers show themselves careless and ill-informed: the words in the script. In virtually every historical film I have ever seen, there are verbal equivalents of the dreaded wrist-watches; sometimes the anachronisms are isolated, but occasionally they are so prevalent that it is as if everyone in the cast was wearing a wrist-watch. And this is an aspect of film-making that no one seems to bother about very much. The only serious discussion of this problem I recall ever having taken place was in an article by Mary Renault on historical fiction (*The Times Literary Supplement*, 23 March 1973), in which she wrote:

> "You may reconstruct in meticulous detail every material fact of the twelfth-century castle, but if your knights talk like cowboys, your reader will get a much more valid historical experience from seeing *High Noon*."

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The viewer who complains of the solecism of baptism-by-sprinkling in a depiction of the early Church is felt to have a good case, and one would receive a sympathetic hearing for pointing out the absurdity of having illuminated Belisha beacons in wartime London, which is what hapened in that lumbering epic of Herman Wouk's, *The Winds of War*. But a viewer who complains of anachronistic use of words like "stretcher-cases" (first used in 1917—and even "stretcher" does not go back beyond 1845), or "Partisan" (first recorded in this sense in 1939) in Goldcrest's recent *Revolution* (1776 and all that), is felt to be a pedant and a bore. The standard retort is: "Do you want everyone running around saying 'Gadzooks' and 'Forsooth'?"

Attitudes to verbal anachronisms are, of course, not uniform across the wide spectrum of those making historical dramas for film and TV; the mistakes made range from the utterly crass ("We just stopped by to see you, Wolfie", in the film version of *Amadeus*) to the mildly unfortunate or almost invisible. Nevertheless, there is a tendency for directors not to be concerned with this aspect of audible authenticity to anything like the extent that visible authenticity concerns them. A location report on the making of *Revolution* showed the director exhorting the thousands of extras to hide those wrist-watches, but one can't imagine him bellowing through the megaphone, "And I don't want any of you guys beginning a sentence with the word 'hopefully'."

WHILE IT IS TRUE that an instinctive sense of the character of the English language at any given time in history is not especially common, the information is not hard to find if one has access to *The Oxford English Dictionary* and its recently completed *Supplement*. Authentic English literature from the past shows us with startling vividness one salient fact: that at any point in the history of our language there are some things it can do, and others it cannot. It is not a monolithic and unchanging unit which came completely into being at an instant in time. In reviewing the carelessness shown by film-makers in the face of the diachronic mode of language, it seems to me that we can draw some revealing conclusions about popular attitudes to history. First let me provide some examples.

Just after the Falklands War there was an excellent documentary drama reminding us that it was not a fresh issue, since in 1771 Dr Johnson had written a pamphlet on the struggle between England and Spain over those distant islands characterised by "bleak and gloomy solitude". In many ways the film reconstruction of those events was good and valuable. A certain amount of genuine 18th-century speech was used. But it was spoilt in the unforgettable moment when Lord North says to Dr Johnson, "We live in a real world and I'm a realist." Not only do the rhythms of that sentence have nothing of the 18th century about them, but there is also a spectacular anachronism. "Realist" and "realism", as *we* use them, are very much 19th-century words ("Realism" in our sense was first recorded by *OED* for 1817, and "realist" for 1847.) The real Lord North might have been able to opine that he was a "realist", but had he done so he would actually have been saying something like, "I am an idealist", since the philosophy of realism recognised the absolute existence of universals, and derived from Thomas Aquinas.

The BBC's *By the Sword Divided* (1983-84) was much praised for its authenticity, and an expert was laid on to get the battles right. A pity another expert was not laid on to look over the script. The moment when I finally lost patience and switched off for good came in the trial scene of Charles I. It was authentically staged in Westminster Hall, and much of Charles's own moving and beautifully expressed speech was used. But then, bang next to the genuine and elegant 17th-century English, an onlooker was given the phrase "snuff it"—a glaring and inappropriate piece of late-Victorian slang, and fully redolent of that much later era. *OED*'s first example is 1885. Even before this solecism, however, there had been many lesser irritations, with characters (dressed to the nines in velvet and lace) using phrases such as "in 48 hours", "put it off", "that's very good of you", "I don't see what I can do", "I'm so unhappy", and "I'll be off". To anyone with any acquaintance with 17th-century English, none of these phrases rings true; they have a modern air about them.

THEN THERE is Robert Bolt's much-praised *A Man for All Seasons* (filmed in 1967), which suffers from similar problems. There are bits of genuine 16th-century speech—which give us a bench-mark, so to speak—but they are placed adjacent to phrases such as "no ceremony", "a passing fancy", "on second thoughts", "you see your way clear" and "licentious mob"; and words such as "superlatively", "deplorable", and "pamphlets". These all occur in the first short interview between King Henry VIII and Thomas More.

"Mob" is especially reprehensible, since even *mobile*, of which it is a shortened version, is not recorded before 1676, and it is very well known that Addison and Swift objected to the abbreviation as a recent vulgarism. "Licentious" provides an interesting example, because the word existed in Henry VIII's time, and *then* it meant "unrestrained by law", and one has more than a suspicion that Bolt does not realise that. "Deplorable", in what Dr Johnson called its "more lax and jocular sense", is a late 17th-century usage. Later on, Thomas More refers to a "nice gown"—a serious error. Many will recall, in *Northanger Abbey*, Henry Tilney's comments on the semantic shift of the word "nice" to its present meaning at the end of the 18th century:

> "Originally perhaps it was applied only to express neatness, propriety, delicacy, or refinement—people were nice in their dress, in their sentiments, or their choice. But now every commendation on every subject is comprised in that one word."

Similar gross faults occur in Robert Bolt's film on Lady Caroline Lamb. Occasionally there is some striking period diction—such as Byron's "Nor you nor I know what love is". But at other times the characters lapse into slipshod modern speech, peppered with idioms such as "Shouldn't we be going?" Bolt uses the word "shady", which began its life as university slang in the 1840s (the first recorded use is in A. H.

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Clough's *The Bothie of Toper-na-Fuosich*), and also "potty", which in the 19th century meant "little or insignificant" (its first recorded use is 1860). Our sense—"crazy" or "dotty"—does not begin until 1920; older viewers will presumably remember the time when it was up-to-the-minute slang.

The presence of the real thing at other points in these productions serves only to heighten such errors and make them seem even more glaring. To use John Wain's vivid figure of speech, the bronze pot of reality collides with the clay pot of art, the clay pot cracks asunder.

MATTERS ARE NOT improving. In the film *Lady Jane* (Grey), Guildford Dudley says that he was "located in a whore-house". One winces in disbelief. "Located" in that sense simply does not sound right, and consulting the works of reference confirms one's worst suspicions: the word, meaning "found" or "discovered", did not enter the language until 1882. Even now, it still has a transatlantic tinge to it.

The much-acclaimed *The Mission* is dominated by images, powerful music, and sound effects—which is probably just as well, since Robert Bolt's script (it won an Evening Standard Award) is either unremarkable or absurd. At one moment, in response to Robert De Niro's claim that he loved the man he killed, Jeremy Irons quips: "A funny way to show it." On the night I saw the film, this drew half-a-dozen entirely justified guffaws from the audience; they were laughing not at the Jesuit priest's attempt at wit, but at a script which could put those words in the mouth of an 18th-century character.

THE PROBLEM IS NOT confined to recreations of distant periods of time. The English language changes so rapidly that it is possible to make mistakes even in presenting historical dramas set earlier in this century and the day before yesterday. *The Grey Fox* won seven Canadian awards, and has an excellent portrayal of the turn-of-the-century bandit Bill Miner, by Richard Farnsworth. Conscientious efforts were made over authenticity, but early in the film a false note is struck by the use of the word "gismo", first used in print in 1943, when *Time* magazine had to provide a definition: "gadget" or "whozis". The trouble is that "gismo" is such a useful and inevitable word that we can barely imagine anyone living without it, any more than we can imagine people living without the gismos that surround us. Still, we are paying film-makers to try to engage in these acts of imagination.

Alan Bleasdale's *The Monocled Mutineer* (BBC 1, 1986) has been much praised (by some) as an authentic recreation of the life of the adventurer Percy Toplis, but the language does not always strike precisely the right note, as when the hero addresses a judge as an "old fart"—a phrase simply not available before the First World War. (Eric Partridge's first citation is 1937.)

A flagrant example set in more recent times was David Hare's *Plenty* (produced at the National Theatre in 1978). Painfully authentic to look at, with the Ford Zodiacs, the Jaguars, the Wolseleys, the 1940s and '50s fashions, and all that; but the elder-statesman figure, Darwin, referring in 1956 to the Suez escapade, says:

> "Yes, I would have defended it, I wouldn't have minded how damn stupid it was. I would have defended it had it been honestly done. But this time we are cowboys and when the English are the cowboys, then in truth I fear for the future of the globe."

Anyone who lived in the '50s can remember perfectly well that that particular use of the word was not around then, and the *Supplement to the OED* confirms this by citing the first reference to the "Cowboy Government" of Rhodesia, in 1964. If he was going to be as careless about authenticity as that, Hare's director might just as well have given Sir John Gielgud a digital watch.

MANY OF THE EXAMPLES I have cited are isolated instances of single words, and are fairly readily detectable. It might just be possible, I suppose, for a director to have at his elbow a computer with the whole of the *OED* programmed into it, which would emit an agonised bleep every time an actor inadvertently antedated the dictionary. But the problem is rather more involved than that. The language of the past was not merely a matter of different vocabulary: the construction of sentences was different, idioms were different, rhythms of speech were different. When in *By the Sword Divided* a character says, "I'm not very enthusiastic about that", it grates not merely because "enthusiastic" was not available in 1650 (it was first recorded in 1716, and was a much discussed term amongst savants and divines in the 18th century), but because the rhythm of the sentence and the idiomatic use of "about" sounds nothing like any 17th-century speech.

Now we are getting into rough waters. Perfect reconstruction of the past at a verbal level seems to be an impossible venture. To do so properly needs enormous sensitivity and knowledge; it needs, in fact, the skill and expertise of a writer like William Golding, whose book *Rites of Passage* (1980), set just after the Napoleonic Wars, is so far as I can see absolutely faultless (although, I confess I have not checked every word against the *OED*). To enter into the linguistic consciousness of the past to that degree is extremely difficult, perhaps virtually unachievable. And it is at this point that one asks the question, "Is it even worth doing?" The consensus seems to be something like: "It's worth doing in an approximate sort of way, but not perfectly, which in any case would be impossible."

In practice, of course, a majority of film-makers do not succeed in creating even rough approximations of the language of the past. They tend to take the view that since knowledge of the English language in its former states of existence is not widespread, it should be no concern of theirs. But, through their reading of literature of the past, many people do have *some* sense of the diachronic nature of the language. And this knowledge may be wider than the moguls suppose, since enormous comic capital is made, in some quarters, out of amusing disjunctions between characters dressed in ancient costume, but speaking modern English.

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Years ago, the comedian Frankie Howerd exploited the endless possibilities of the device in *Up Pompeii*, and it is surely a central source of amusement in the television series *The Black Adder*. A recent episode of Rowan Atkinson's comedy had the wicked hero living in the 16th century, but using phrases like "Go and put the kettle on", and "You're a right berk". Words like "quid" (first entered the language 1688) and "agony-aunt" occur in the programmes. "Agony-aunt" has entered the language so recently that the editors of the *Supplement to the OED* even wrote to Claire Rayner (a noted practitioner of the art) to seek the elusive information. One laughs at all this, but only the thinnest of partitions divides it from the plays of writers such as Robert Bolt.

How have we reached this state of affairs, in which script-writers and directors regard anachronistic words and phrases as of no very great importance? In some degree, by a combination of carelessness and ignorance. But there is another reason, and it has its roots in theories about history that we have inherited from previous centuries. The taste for picturesque bric-à-brac that helped to convey a sense of particular periods in history, nurtured by Sir Walter Scott and other writers, stressed the romantic distance of the past, the intriguing foreignness of it all.

"The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there", as L. P. Hartley says at the beginning of *The Go-Between*. But alongside this view runs a quite different one: that in essential features human beings have not changed from one age to another, and that human psychology is a constant. A typical expression of this view is found in Matthew Arnold's preface to his *Poems* (1853).

> "The outward man of Oedipus or of Macbeth, the houses in which they lived, the ceremonies of their courts, he cannot accurately figure to himself, but neither do they essentially concern him. His business is with their inward man; with their feelings and behaviour in certain tragic situations, which engage their passions as men; these have in them nothing local and casual; they are as accessible to the modern poet as to a contemporary."

I suggest that this view has lodged itself very firmly in the minds of the producers of historical dramas and the writers of historical fictions. They have convinced themselves that people in the past were much like those in the present; and they find it necessary to believe this, because it is one way of establishing the relevance and points of identification in their dramas. They are astute enough to realise that audiences cannot take complete escapism—it induces guilt and boredom. But partial escapism is good business. One has the romantic setting—the costumes, the guns, the swords, the rigging on the galleons are the constant visual reminder of it. But alongside these exotica are the familiar psychology and structure of human and social relationships.

The language will have to be familiar too, since in these costume dramas it is the language which must impress the audience that these characters are uncannily like us. Very often, if one tries closing one's eyes while watching and just listens to the words, one immediately loses the sense that the action is set in the past. It is the opposite of going to see a Shakespeare play in modern dress; there one shuts one's eyes and imagines doublet and hose, opening them with mild astonishment to see lounge suits and short skirts. Recent film-makers try, more or less (although, watching *Revolution*, one would not think it), to cut out the really glaring verbal absurdities, since they might endanger the escapism. But they make no strenuous efforts beyond that, since they are not really interested in facing the disconcerting possibility that people in the past were strange.

It is no exaggeration to say that Elizabethan Englishmen would be as alien and inscrutable to us as the Japanese warriors in Samurai films. And *they* would find *us* pretty strange too—which is why BBC 2's *The Marlowe Inquest* (1986) was so unsatisfactory; it had speakers of a more or less efficient middle-brow present-day English talking to Thomas Kyd, Sir Thomas Walsingham, and others. What the Elizabethans ought to have said to the 20th-century inquirers was, "You speak a language that I understand not!" But somehow the beruffed and bejewelled ghosts had picked up the language of the intervening centuries, as when Walsingham affirmed that "[Christopher] Marlowe was a genius"—an opinion it was actually impossible to express before the early 18th century. The flavour of the original documents that were cited served merely to make the invented speech unsatisfactory and unconvincing.

The original pieces of literature that survive from the past are daunting challenges to these historical dramas by 20th-century writers. Constantly there as a haunting and accusing presence, some of them are so powerful, so alien, so intriguing and so authentic that I wonder why we bother with our paltry fakes. I suppose that it is because they make it easier for the past to say what we want it to say, rather than what it might actually say were we capable of listening to it properly.

At the same time, an audience which goes to see what they take to be authentic plays from the past will find the

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pernicious itch to rewrite plays from previous periods very widespread. The recent Royal Shakespeare Company production of Aphra Behn's *The Rover* (1677) is a case in point. The director John Barton has put his hands all over the text, and we are left with a monstrous and unsatisfying hybrid. At one point the phrase "bag of bays" has been replaced by "bouquet garni". There are objections to this on three grounds: the author did not write the phrase; "bouquet garni" did not exist in the 17th century (it was first recorded in 1852); and the substitute phrase is actually less clear than the original, since for many people "bouquet garni" will suggest a bunch of herbs, which is not correct in context at all. Even more crassly, he has introduced into a play set in the 1650s the later Jacobite toast to "The King Over the Water". John Barton has been rubbing shoulders with the dramatists of the past for so long that he has succumbed to the delusive idea that he is of their company and has the right to tamper with their texts.

The notorious RSC *Alfa Romeo and Juliet* is a related phenomenon, but ultimately less harmful, since no one could for a moment imagine that it bore any relation to Shakespeare.

The epigraph to a good deal of this activity of heavily revising original texts and concocting fakes might be: "The past is not a foreign country—they do things exactly the same there." Well, they might; but to make the people there speak and behave exactly like us is rather to prejudge the issue.

One form of serious drama is conspicuously anachronistic, but deliberately so, rather than accidentally. Wrist-watches are positively flaunted. Jean Anouilh did this in *Becket ou l'honneur de Dieu* (1959; tr. L. Hill, 1961) when he has the King slap a wench's hefty thigh and say to the disapproving Archbishop: "And isn't that aesthetic too? Some people go into ecstasies over cathedrals. But this is a work of art too!" In referring to aesthetics he is using the term about 600 years too early. This is so flagrant that it is obvious that the author really does not care; the incongruity is part of the effect. *Becket* is riddled with startling anachronisms—words such as "bigwig" (first used 1792), "bored" (first used by Byron in 1823), "collaborator" (1802), "loon" (first used 1885). Even "riff-raff" was not available until 1470, but perhaps we should allow him that.

There is a problem about Henry II's period, anyway, since native English had a minute vocabulary, and kings and bishops tended not to use it. Introducing the English translation of *Becket* in 1962, W. D. Howarth wrote:

> ". . . by means of deliberate anachronisms, and many modern colloquialisms and turns of phrase, history is domesticated and presented in everyday terms, so that a valid connection is established between the historical characters and events portrayed and our own times."

This articulates the case for writers who employ anachronisms knowingly and deliberately, as opposed to those who employ them carelessly and ignorantly. But Mary Renault did not like this strained attempt at relevance, and neither do I.

A powerful example of this genre of intended anachronism is Howard Barker's *Pity in History*, shown on BBC 2 in 1985. Like *By the Sword Divided*, this play is set in the English Civil War. Cavalier and Roundhead confront each other—but in a church. The lady of the manor has commissioned the sculptor Gaukroger to carve a memorial to her late husband, and he carries on with his work while Parliamentarian soldiers take refuge. The script is crammed with flagrant anachronisms. The stonemason keeps asking for a "sandwich", which is of course an 18th-century word associated with the fourth Earl of Sandwich (1718-90). At one point the soldiers sing the tune *Rule Britannia*, which would be recognised by most viewers as of a later date. And anyone over forty would be disconcerted to hear a reference to "Lord Haw-Haw", the traitor William Joyce (1906-1946). "Cocoa-time" strikes a false note, as does the recent slang "yobbos" (first recorded in the *Supplement to the OED* in 1922, it is derived from the back-slang for boy).

No one could miss these violent dislocatory effects. "Redundancy"—losing one's job because there is no further work to be done—was first used in this sense in *The Economist* in 1931. In 1650 the word would have meant superfluity. Barker also has "mass-production", and "geezer" (first used in 1885); "squiggle", which first entered the language in the United States around 1800. "Quid" appears, as does "bob" (noted as "coiners' slang" in 1789) and "vandal", which seems to have been first used by Dryden in 1700 (as an adjective).

Three other terms loomed large, since they are rather more central to the main themes of the play: "art", "naturalism", and "sensibility". Venables, the lady of the manor, chillingly played by Anna Massey, clutches at art as a sort of fetishistic consolation, and uses the word with full post-Romantic resonance. For various semantic reasons, such a loaded use of the word was not available in the mid-17th century—though this is not to deny that there were aesthetes at that time who were prepared to die for it—and kill for it. The sculptor, beautifully acted by Norman Rodway, has heard about "naturalism", but it would not have been called that then.

In a *Radio Times* interview with Jim Hiley (29 June-5 July 1985) Howard Barker revealed that he mistrusts "the headlong rush of naturalism". The anachronisms must therefore have some intended point, and are not the result of mere incompetence and ignorance. It is as if the future has somehow intruded itself into the past. The sculptor has a prophetic dream of museums in the future, with works on public display. The sandwich he eats does not satisfy—as if the future and all that it will offer (which the soldiers are ushering in) will not satisfy either.

Watching Barker's play, I was never under the illusion that I was being provided with a complete photographic image of the past; I had instead a sense of watching an *image* of that past, as conceived in the mind of one man.

Of course all representations of the past are images of this kind, but the presenters usually try to hide that fact. On the whole it seems more satisfactory if that sense of perspective is built into the presentation, so that we are reminded of our standpoint. This perspective is much easier to present in the theatre than on film, since theatre has an instinctive tenden-

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cy towards ritual and non-naturalism. In fairness to Robert Bolt, his glaring anachronisms are more defensible in the stage version of *A Man for All Seasons* (1960) than in the film, because on stage the actors sometimes adopt Brechtian alienating devices, whereas in the film these are entirely obliterated and it attempts to restore the events to a naturalistic world.

ULTIMATELY THIS IS WHY a work like William Morris's *A Dream of John Ball* (1888) is less irritating. The narrator goes back to Richard II's time; his heart is "ravished with the extreme beauty, elegance and fitness" of the architecture, and he is struck by "the grave sonorous language, and the quaint and mannered forms of speech", so beautiful as to affect him "almost to tears". Morris at least thinks that if one is going to visit the past one ought to feel excited by the opportunity actually to hear archaic speech. The visitor, however, retains his 19th-century point of view, even as the time-traveller in Morris's short story "Lindenborg Pool" retains his; and we have the sense that it is a dream of the past, rather than an attempt at naturalistic actuality. This can be more satisfying than laboured costume drama, where chinks in the armour will always eventually show. What on earth is the rationale for producing something that is authentic in one direction but utterly spurious in another?

Of course, to capture perfectly the pace, the rhythm, the syntax, the register of the language of the past would be impossible. But surely one or two stalwart souls ought to try. Most film-makers would benefit from greater accuracy—perhaps they should hire linguistic advisers (who would not necessarily be paid any attention). I once tried to prevent a friend of mine from using the phrase "bedside manner" in a radio play about Dr Johnson, but it was broadcast with the modernism sticking out like a sore thumb.

Certainly a linguistic adviser could have prevented what is in my experience the most crass mistake ever perpetrated. It occurred in one of those interminable histories of Henry VIII. There came a point when Henry's daughter collapsed. He commanded the courtiers to stand back, urging Mary to stand up and walk around for a while to restore her "circulation".

Not only did Henry VIII write *Greensleeves*; he also, it seems, anticipated William Harvey.

Looking for an Ice Age

(for Oscar)

One today. Candle blown,
He stretches out his hands in sleep,
Searched out by the bitter cold
Which rushes the opening door
Of a January worst
Since the one no one forgets

When the main road shut at Robin Hill
Where blizzards piled against the holly
And daily filled the snow-plough's track.
No bus for weeks meant work and school
Over buried stiles through snow
Slow-going as Warren's sledge
Whose milk-crates rattled
Over white no longer growing green:
Winter-chained till into April.
And even then a lump of black-specked drift
Hung on in the shadow of Finney's barn.

Was it then that somebody tapped the glass
And the finger began to move again?

You can't remember beyond the blur
Of all the milestones flicking past:

A cry; a smile; a step; a word.

But what you'd give
For another spell of that frozen time,

At least one long enough to watch him
Grow in a slower melt of years.

John Lancaster

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LETTERS

Three Copies of a Book

THE REPORT (in "Life & Letters Today", ENCOUNTER, December) of Richard Heber (1773-1833), who remarked that "No gentleman can be without three copies of a book, one for show, one for use, and one for borrowers", reminded me of a Harvard professor, at the time when Harvard professors were often gentlemen of independent means (*ca.* early 20th century). Albert Bushnell Hart, a professor of history, invariably brought three copies of any book he wanted. His reason was, since he did not fancy the tiresome chore of taking notes, that two copies were for the tearing out of pages, and one copy for his shelf—two copies for the research chore since the material he wanted often ran, of course, to the verso of the page.

It was a modification, you see, of an old definition of research, which carried over into my youth: "research is writing out in longhand what other people have put down in books. . . ."

A gentleman, obviously, did research by more accessible means.

DANIEL BELL

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Besançon's Paradox

ALAIN BESANÇON'S grasp of Soviet mentality is, I think, unparalleled among Sovietologists [see his conversation with George Urban, "Language & Power in Soviet Society", May and June 1987]. It is impossible to understand Communism without a knowledge of practically all the social sciences. A master in many fields, Besançon meticulously scrutinises Communist pathology and commands respect.

Like certain other scholars, notably Alexander Zinoviev, Claude Polin and Alain de Benoist, Besançon demolishes the myth that Communism maintains itself in power solely by military and police repression. Instead he points to the popular and egalitarian character of Communist repression against dissidents. Let me add a personal word to his description of "hijacked language" in the Soviet Union.

When several years ago my father, a former Judge in Communist Yugoslavia, was condemned to four years of prison on charges of "fascist propaganda" and "spying for the CIA", even his closest friends, including some family members, found cause to disavow him. To them, he did not appear as a "dissident hero", but rather as a despicable "party-pooper", who only brought more confusion into the already confused and split-minded semantics of Communist Yugoslavia. My father's case showed that in order to be a dissident in Communist countries, one must first be prepared to encounter a great deal of popular hostility, and in addition one must train oneself in what Abbé Sieyès used to call "the talent to survive". Besançon's merit is to argue that in Communism the few do not suppress many, but rather that many suppress the few.

But what about America? I have spent several years in the United States, and have encountered here the same uniformity, the same obsession with egalitarianism, the same "wooden language"—elegantly termed "baby talk". At times, it seems to me that America has, ironically, been more successful in realising the Marxian egalitarian utopia than its Soviet counterpart. How else to explain that so many American academics and others are enamoured of absolute social and cultural equality? Many Eastern European émigrés find this baffling; especially when the pervasive economic inequality is never seriously tackled.

BESANÇON ARGUES that an average Soviet émigré (or for that matter a Yugoslav émigré) is unable to adapt himself to the standards of the Occidental Man. Is he specific enough? From my own observations, precisely the most vulgar and uncultured Eastern European émigrés seem also the most adaptable species in Western countries. Conversely, the most vulnerable émigrés, e.g., those who are least "consumer"-minded, frequently regret coming to the West. Witness the case of 50 Soviet émigrés who *redefected* last year from America to the Soviet Union. A great number of them were artists and intellectuals (in short, educated individuals). Will Zinoviev be proved right in predicting that the following decades may see a reverse immigration from the West to the East?

And can conservative thinkers put up credible resistance against the Soviet syndrome? We see their incapacity to cope with the dynamics of egalitarian doctrines. To declare legal and constitutional equality and then to expect masses of people to reverse this process along the road, is a self-defeating chimera. Equality cannot be tampered with. Once it is proclaimed in one sphere, it must run its full course in all other spheres. The pervasive attraction of Marxism, the upsurge of the "Homo Sovieticus" mentality, and the abasement of public discourse appear thus, in historical perspective, as the most logical and rational outcome of all egalitarian doctrines. Some day America may become "Communist", although it will continue decorating itself with the label of "anti-Communism" or "liberalism".

I do not agree with Alain Besançon, but I am grateful to him for shedding more light on the disturbing phenomenon of Communism in his penetrating remarks in the Urban interview.

TOMISLAV SUNIC

Goleta
California

Dennis Potter Replies

"TELEVISION DRAMA, especially on the BBC, has for some years been used to agitate for social causes (cf. *Cathy Come Home*) and to project political views, almost invariably those of the Left", writes Herb Greer in your November issue. He goes back 23 years for his example, across a great sea of the opposite; but a footnote at the end of this silly observation "explains" thus: "BBC drama's favoured writers include the far-Left Alan Bleasdale and the Trotsykist [*sic*] Jim Allen." About 0.1% of the total drama output? Clearly, these fellows should not be allowed to work. Such McCarthykissed drollery is especially amusing to those of us who have to deal with the nervous wrecks at the Corporation.

"Another series, on pornography—and politics—will come from Dennis Potter, an active supporter of the Labour Party". Greer writes. Ooo! The sentence should be spoken aloud, from the side of the mouth.

I have written no such series, nor am I an active supporter (let alone member) of the Labour Party. I hover nowadays between Steel and Kinnock, seldom alighting. It is as good a position as any to drop the sort of stuff Greer seems to need to sweeten his ludicrous snideries. They are as out of place in your columns as are his ignorance and fraught style.

DENNIS POTTER

Ross-on-Wye
Herefordshire

Reply to Potter

JUST BEFORE the election, in *The Observer*, Dennis Potter declared himself a Labour supporter. I believed him: was it naive of me? or has he handed ENCOUNTER a scoop? He seems now to expose himself as a member of the great politically unwashed, i.e. undecided. Is this a step in the Right direction? I think we should be told.

Here we have a man whose writing, in my opinion, can be piquant on TV, and mediocre in the theatre. But when

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he composes a letter—well! . . . barring people from work is his scenario, not mine. My burden is that opponents of the Left should have their work broadcast too, and not choked off. And I didn't say that Potter had actually written that series. Based on press reports which he did not deny, I said it was coming from him. He disowns it now? Another scoop.

Neither did I say that BBC drama consists totally of Left-wing work. Potter quotes what I said, but doesn't appear to grasp its content. The observation that the Left predominates in original plays at the BBC was made in the 1977 Annan Report, and before, and has been repeated since. Potter's "great sea of the opposite" (if I understand this, it means agitation for Right-wing views and against social causes) makes a resonant fantasy; but as seas go, it is pretty dry. *Cathy Come Home* (1966, not 1965) was no isolated example. The work of Ken Loach and Tony Garnett did not stop there, and I might have mentioned David Mercer, Trevor Griffiths, John Mortimer—do I really have to bore the reader with a long list of Left-wing and radical chic producers, writers, directors, etc.?

Potter says, or sputters, that I am ignorant, snide, silly, ludicrous, McCarthyist, and by golly, he doesn't like my style. Verily, I reel. But no one with any sense will be fooled by the way he stuffs words in my mouth, or by his disingenuous rant, which in its penultimate sentence drops syntax and meaning altogether.

HERB GREER

Manchester

"Gay" Conservatives

M's assessment in his "Column" of attitudes towards homosexuals (ENCOUNTER, June) is much too optimistic.

Some Conservative politicians in and out of Parliament want to recriminalise sexual acts in private between consenting civilian males over 21. The Conservative leader of South Staffordshire district-council wants 90% of homosexuals to be sent to the gas chamber; no leading member of the Party has publicly rebuked him. The Minister for Local Government recently told the Commons that presenting homosexual relations as being as valid for homosexuals as heterosexual ones are for hetrosexuals "could bring death in a generation . . . it is the end of creation". (The same could be said about encouraging people to become priests, monks and nuns in churches which require the clergy to be celibate, but I doubt if Dr Boyson has ever denounced such encouragement.)

In recent months the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Pope, and the Chief Rabbi have deplored homosexual relationships. The most popular newspapers seem intent on presenting homosexuals as menacing or ludicrous. Verbal queer-bashing by politicians, clerics, and journalists is matched by physical queer-bashing by yobbos who assault and even kill people they know or believe to be homosexual.

Not only does the criminal law discriminate against homosexuals in more ways than *M* mentions but so do the police in dealing with alleged soliciting and other behaviour in public. A striking example occurred in 1986 when the Metropolitan Police prosecuted two men for kissing in public but merely warned a man and woman whose prolonged copulation in the garden of a London square had caused complaints. The attitudes of too many Judges and Magistrates are well illustrated by their gratuitously offensive remarks in some cases and by their lenient sentences for queer-bashers. In passing light sentences on some youths convicted of throwing petrol bombs to frighten some men they thought were homosexuals, the Judge said that much more severe sentences would have been passed if the youths had had terrorist or racist motives.

PEOPLE WHOSE homosexuality becomes known are often rejected by their families, friends, colleagues, and employers even though their homosexuality has not adversely affected their behaviour with those people. The armed Forces, the Civil Service, and the Police set bad examples.

M is right to say that the tactics of some Gay Rights campaigners have alienated many heterosexuals. The same is true of the excessive and insensitive efforts of some local authorities to improve the social position of homosexuals. The Left's concept of "heterosexism" and denunciation of it have seemed hostile to heterosexuality as such.

As *M* remarks, even in countries such as France, where sex is less charged with disapproval than it is here, attitudes towards homosexuals are not wholly satisfactory. But in many such countries there has been an increasing recognition that homosexuals are ordinary people who, like the left-handed, happen to differ from others in only one respect, which does not justify making them pariahs. What are misleadingly called "Gay Rights" are really the right of homosexuals to be treated in law (both criminal and civil) and in practice on the same general basis as hetrosexuals—although not necessarily in exactly the same ways. Some of our partners in the Commonwealth, NATO and Europe have legislated on these lines. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in 1981 and the European Parliament in 1984 urged their member-states to end discrimination against homosexuals.

Both the Alliance and the Labour Party have advocated doing this. Many Conservatives support the idea as an application of the Party's belief in personal freedom and in equality under the law for all subjects of the Crown. If these politicians had the courage of their convictions, legislation could end the second-class citizenship of homosexuals. They are ordinary citizens, taxpayers, rate-payers, and electors. They contribute to society by work and voluntary efforts in the same ways as heterosexuals, and are no more likely than heterosexuals to commit crimes against persons, property, and the public interest.

PETER CAMPBELL

Chairman
Conservative Group for Homosexual Equality
London

New Poets

IN THE SPRING of 1989 Chatto & Windus hope to publish the second volume of the New Chatto Poets series. Anyone wishing to have their work considered for inclusion should send it to me, at the address below, before 31 March 1988. Submissions should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope.

ANDREW MOTION

Chatto & Windus
30 Bedford Square
London WC1 3RP

Archbishop or Dean?

IN YOUR ISSUE of December 1987, Jean-François Revel writes that "In Great Britain, the most prestigious leaders of opinion, from Bernard Shaw to the Archbishop of Canterbury, condemned Fascism only to bless the Moscow Trials and the ensuing purge, and—with a remarkable logic—the Nazi-Soviet Pact."

While the general view he expresses could be challenged, Monsieur Revel is entitled to hold it. But he is not entitled to include the Archbishop of Canterbury in his spectrum. There is no evidence whatever for Archbishop Lang having approved of the Moscow Trials or the Nazi-Soviet Pact. I suspect Monsieur Revel has in mind the notorious "Red" Dean of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson, who was a devoted and indeed slavish follower of the Soviet line.

But should not Monsieur Revel be able to distinguish between an Archbishop and a Dean?

It reminds me of one of my favourite novelists, Jean d'Ormesson, who made one of his characters go as an Oxford

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undergraduate to All Souls. I shall begin to believe in "Europe" when distinguished Frenchmen bother to learn about this country's institutions.

MAX BELOFF

House of Lords

No Santa Claus

I AM GRATEFUL for your articles by Mr Herb Greer and M. Jean-François Revel (ENCOUNTER, November 1987). They impress me as having researched their subjects; and they write well.

I was shocked to learn about the shenanigans at BBC—I believed that BBC was a place of integrity. Learning that they are as dishonest as our PBS and CBS *et al.* is like a four year old learning that there ain't no Santa Claus. As Harry Truman wrote:

> "I look with commiseration over the great body of my fellow citizens who, reading the newspapers, live and die in the belief that they have known something of what has been passing in the world in their time."

Dan Rather, Peter and Jack and Bob MacNeil read from their teleprompters —their main talent—and most people believe their propaganda. How can we compete with the Soviets? We can't.

HARVEY SHAHAN

Prescott
Arizona

Tribes & Detribalisation

MR HARVEY TYSON'S article on "The Duel with the Censors" (ENCOUNTER, April) seems a masterpiece of the crafty journalism which he praises and practises, misguiding the unwary reader by the deliberate omission of the most important facts. Most of the leaders and articles in his paper are indeed superb examples of his craft, aimed as they are, principally, at the two-thirds of his readers who happen to be black.

In the first paragraph of his article he exalts the traditions of democracy handed down from Britain and Europe. His Europe is probably the good old continent of Czar Nicholas and the Emperors Franz Joseph and Wilhelm II, his Britain the country so well remembered by so many Afrikaners from those good old days of Lord Kitchener.

It is much worse to find that Mr Tyson omits the traditions of African tribalism, traditions which have evolved in the course of successful survival on this continent, traditions which incidentally contain craftiness or craftsmanship to a degree at least equal to contemporary journalism and certainly superior to the craftiness of so many Western politicians. The survival value of this approach must not be underrated. Mr Tyson's craft is still not up to African traditions. He was born in South Africa, but he belongs to the non-tribal section which has been trying to gain some influence, without any success whatsoever. I have tried myself.

Mr Tyson claims moderate principles for his newspaper. Yet his despair over the lack of influence on the part of non-tribal South Africans, gathered hitherto in the PFP (Progressive Federal Party) which he supports, has induced him to favour, in his journalistic ways, radical elements. It may be quite legitimate, exercised in the way he describes, but he is not a moderate; hence the censorship.

WHAT IS THE actual position? The vast majority of all South African population groups is moderate and wishes to proceed peacefully to a new dispensation in town and country. Into the tribal pattern of African people, including the White Tribe of the Afrikaners, the discovery of the country's mineral wealth has brought, in the course of four generations, some two million non-tribal Europeans, mostly British and Irish but also Jews, Greeks, Germans and Portuguese (more than half-a-million lately from Mozambique and Angola).

It is quite essential to note the non-tribal element; the tribes feel that all these people could disappear again once the mineral wealth were exhausted. The millions of newly-urbanised blacks are becoming detribalised to some extent, but are by no means yet non-tribal; and black policemen may in most instances be assumed to be of different tribes than the radical youths and students. In fact, as Woodrow Wyatt has pointed out recently in ENCOUNTER ("A Necklace for Azania", September-October 1986), most trouble today originates from the Xhosas, and not only in the form of the African National Council.

If the tribes feel that the non-tribal elements could disappear again or that the masses of the new urban and comparatively more affluent blacks would disappear again, they are quite mistaken. But if the non-tribal elements of all groups feel that the tribes would one day disappear, they are equally mistaken.

Harvey Tyson's balancing act between a moderate majority and the radical Communists is not done on a tightrope. It is done on a chalk line on solid ground, not always straight, and nobody fears for him. But he is not a moderate. He wants black power for his country. He calls his aim democracy. But which *demos* (= *tribe*, the nearest meaning of the Greek word)? The ruling tribe (*demos*) is willing to share some power, but not willing to be ruled by any other tribe (*demos*). Nor does any black *demos* wish to submit to any other black *demos*. In this complex situation, Mr Tyson's aim and craft, which he so ably describes in his article, has done much harm to moderate thinking, as it gropes these days for some form of "Federation" or "Cantonalisation". The last elections have proved his failure. Even the opposition is now tribal. With the help of Mr Tyson's craft, the non-tribal elements have lost out altogether.

Should it not be rather his task to try and get the last horse into the starter's box, the one horse that has now strayed away to Lusaka? The crowds are waiting. Does it carry his money? The favourites are all in their boxes.

R. L. JORDAN

Sandton
South Africa

Watson's "Contradiction"

GEORGE WATSON in his "The Conservative Contradiction" (ENCOUNTER, November 1987) rightly observes that many conservative values are incompatible with a competitive or—as it has also been called—an "open society". I take issue, however, with his interpretation of Adam Smith as being "less the father of monetarism than of welfare."

The quote from *Wealth of Nations* that George Watson uses to support this conjecture is taken from a chapter (I.viii) where Smith reports on the rise of real wages in England and discusses the question whether the resulting "improvement in the circumstances of the lower ranks of the people [is] to be regarded as an advantage or as an inconvenience to the society. . . ." (Glasgow edition, p.96)

The question, therefore, that Smith ends up answering in the affirmative is not so much whether the poor should receive welfare payments but whether the rise in real wages that occurred as a result of competition on the labour market is beneficial to society. Furthermore, it should be noted that "the real recompense of labour, the real quantity of the necessaries and conveniences of life which it can procure to the labourer" rose because—as Smith reports—the prices of a large number of life necessities decreased due to technological advances. Such changes in relative prices can only occur in a relatively inflation-free environment.

Although Adam Smith is not the father of monetarism, he certainly would have shared its principal aim, i.e. stability of the consumer price index.

STEFAN SINN

Kiel
West Germany

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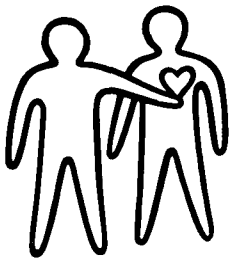

London

BONKERS: *I recently overheard [Peregrine Worsthorne writes] the following exchange between two very respectable "Mummy says" kind of girls in a chic Knightsbridge restaurant.*

First girl: "Did you have a good weekend?"

Second girl: "Yes, thanks, lots of lovely bonking."

Am I wrong in thinking that this new word "bonking" has made it possible, perhaps for the first time ever, for even the most modest of females to talk about sex without any "pudeur" whatsoever? The girls in question would rather have died than say "lots of lovely f---ing", or "lots of lovely screwing", or "I got laid".

Before bonking got invented all the other euphemisms suggested rather brutally and crudely that sex was something men did to women. Bonking is a friendly, gentle, cosy kind of word which does to sex what Burke said hypocrisy does to vice: loses half its evil by losing all its grossness. Do we know who first coined the word?

THE SPECTATOR

New York City

SLIPPERY SLIME: **In a precedent that may hearten all those who fight for enrichment of the language, a Judge here has ruled that calling someone "a sleazebag who slimed up from the bayou" is "merely an expression of opinion" and therefore not slanderous.**

"While agreeing that sleazebag is not an expression one would want on a letter of recommendation", he said, "its meaning is too imprecise to constitute slander. Nor does the mere description of its means of locomotion as sliming rise to the legal status of slander, for the term is too slippery to be a fact I can grasp."

DAILY MAIL

New York City

LAW & NON-LAW: *In an aphorism, the former Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Newton Minow, gave no less than four different bisociations of the terms "permitted" and "prohibited":*

> *"After 35 years, I have finished a comprehensive study of European comparative law. . . . In Germany, under the law, everything is prohibited, except that which is permitted. In France, under the law, everything is permitted, except that which is prohibited. In the Soviet Union, under the law, everything is prohibited, including that which is permitted. And in Italy, under the law, everything is permitted, especially that which is prohibited."*

REUTERS

Barcelona

ANGLAIS, FRANGLAIS: **Comedian Roy Hudd's BBC show, "The News Huddlines", has been judged Europe's best radio programme by an international panel of judges in Barcelona. Which is amazing considering the mauling it got at the hands of a hard-pressed French translator.**

Apart from veteran comic Hudd, no one was more delighted than translator Jacqueline Chnéour who struggled for 40 hours to put the 25-minute show into French for the panel.

For some of Hudd's election gags were so colloquial that Jacqueline had to totally change their sense to give them a semblance of meaning in her native language. And at times she even had to use an explanatory footnote!

Take the bunch of Tories triumphantly singing (à la mode des football yobboes) *"Here we go, here we go, here we go"*. It comes across as *"On y est, on y est, on y est!"* Accurate but totally incomprehensible to any Frenchman.

Most impressively, Jacqueline coined her own phrase for *"Loony Left"*, destined surely for common usage in Britain. *"La Gauche Gaga!"*

MAIL ON SUNDAY

London

MONO-CULTURE: **Latin, Greek, and Classical studies have been dropped from the curriculum in a north London girls' secondary school because they are "monocultural".**

The budget for Classics teaching was transferred to finance the teaching of Bengali.

THE TIMES

London

DIRTY OLD WOMEN: *"His eyes were ripping your knickers off", writes Janet Street-Porter about Elvis Presley.*

Janet is making her début as one of the brash new generation of women TV critics. Another of the ladies writes: "When Joan Collins kicks the bucket, I'd like to suppose that boxer-shorted battalions of toy boys will flash—literally—before her. . . ."

For years women told us [Peter McKay writes] that journalism was in the grip of dirty old men who drooled over pin-up pictures. The new wave of Glenda Slags are balancing things out nicely.

LONDON EVENING STANDARD

Frankfurt-am-Main

WORKING ON THE RAILROAD: *The increasingly standardised use of English terms on the railroad has been objected to by the trade union of the* **Deutsche Bundesbahn** *on behalf of its employed officials, clerks, and workers. It claims that since "Manager" has become acceptable there has been an avalanche of "managerial jabberwocky" (***Management-Fachchinesisch***). A spokesman for the trade union pointed his finger at the usage of "Cash-Management" (for* **Generalkasse***), and also "After Sales Service". The foreign-phrase-fad (***Fremdwortfimmel***) is a danger to the integrity of German language and speech, for the English words create a class distance between leadership and co-workers, and, in addition, for the men who are working on the railroad who don't happen to know English it is a "humiliation".*

FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG

Singapore

DEADLY NUMBER: **For the Chinese businessman, more important than the make of car is its licence plate. The demand for specific numbers has been so great that the Singapore vehicle registry holds an annual auction for them with superstitious owners prepared to pay up to £10,000 for their choice.**

The numbers attracting most bids are 1, 2, 6, and 8—with 8888 considered the most propitious.

For the number 8888 a £5,000 bid might succeed, but all the fours—4444—can be had for nothing. The Chinese associate the number with death.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

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